

BS2555  
.K74



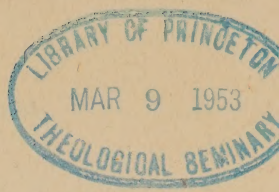






A COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPELS





# A COMMENTARY ON THE GOSPELS

By  
✓  
RONALD KNOX

NEW YORK  
SHEED & WARD  
1952



Nihil Obstat

Francis S. Rossiter  
*Censor Delegatus*

Imprimatur

Richard J. Cushing  
✠ Archbishop of Boston

Date: September 15, 1952

TO DR. REDMOND, OF USHAW





## PREFACE

THIS commentary is written for the benefit of those who have no skill in Latin or Greek, but want to read the Bible for themselves without shirking the difficulties.

Even if we approach the sacred writings in the most docile spirit imaginable, difficulties will nevertheless present themselves to the mind, and stick like burs if we do not get rid of them. Thus (i) we shall come across apparent contradictions; as when Mark tells us (15.25) that the Crucifixion began at nine in the morning, whereas John (19.14) makes Pilate bring our Lord out to the judgement-seat at noon. (ii) Certain sayings will be obscure, as when our Lord says (Mark 9.48), "Fire will be every man's seasoning; every victim must be seasoned with salt". (iii) Other sayings will challenge our belief on historical grounds, as when our Lord seems to prophesy (Matthew 24.34) that he will come back in judgement during the life-time of some who are listening to him. (iv) We shall not always be certain whether we are on new ground, or on ground we have travelled before; ought we, or ought we not, to identify the parable of the talents (Matthew 25.14-30) with the parable of the pounds (Luke 19.11-27)? (v) If we discuss the Bible with our non-Catholic friends, we shall find that there are variant readings in the old manuscripts, and that the text as we have it in the Latin Vulgate is not universally accepted; e.g., the story of the woman taken in adultery (John 8.1-11) is omitted by many ancient authorities. For these and for similar reasons, even reading the Gospels will not be the simple business we should have expected it to be.

The object of this commentary is to examine, briefly and candidly, such difficulties as present themselves to the mind of the ordinary reader. No attempt is made to discuss those intricate problems of scholarship and of historical criticism which nineteen centuries of study have suggested to learned intellects; it is all open-cast mining here. Nor, again, will the reader find his curiosity satisfied about a

## PREFACE

hundred questions of legitimate interest which may occur to him—"How large was the Lake of Galilee? What is meant by the name Iscariot? Who was Herod the tetrarch?" And so on. My object has been to elucidate the sacred text, not to illustrate it.

If we would be true to the principles of criticism, we must read the Gospels not *in vacuo*, but against a background of Christian tradition which is older than themselves, and would have survived, in however distorted a form, if they had perished. That our Lord was born at Bethlehem, and that he suffered on a Friday—we must not confine our study to the evidence of documents if we would examine the truth of statements like these. But how much importance should we attach to the stream of tradition, fouled as it clearly is by constant comparison with the written record? That is a question which may be variously answered; and in the nature of the case this commentary will estrange some of its readers by shewing a conservative bias. That cannot be helped; I have tried to let it be seen where my judgement has been formed on the evidence of the Gospels themselves, and where I have interpreted that evidence in the light of tradition. Even those readers who write down my conclusions as valueless may, here and there, find my treatment of the problem suggestive. *Illuminati sunt oculi mei, eo quod gustaverim paullulum de melle isto*; criticism may have been fertilized, even though there is no store of honey.

I am hoping to write a companion commentary on the remainder of the New Testament, but for various reasons it seemed best to publish the Gospel part separately.

Mells,  
July, 1952.

R. A. KNOX.

# CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	xi
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW	I
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK	73
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE	118
THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN	200
INDEX	279



## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

For the convenience of readers who wish to use this commentary with Monsignor Knox's translation of The New Testament, the page headings of the commentary have been made to correspond as closely as possible, in consideration of the material treated, to those of the regular edition of The New Testament.

## INTRODUCTION

### *THE FIRST THREE GOSPELS*

**M**ATTHEW, Mark and Luke, if we judge them by the ordinary standards of criticism based on internal evidence, are not three wholly unconnected documents. There are too many similarities between them, even slight verbal similarities, to make such a verdict possible without the hypothesis of some miraculous intervention. Either they are connected by direct dependence, one copying from another, or else by indirect dependence, two or more copying from a single, now lost, original. It is commonly asserted, because it is the fashion among modern Biblical critics to think so, that Matthew and Luke both wrote with Mark's Gospel in front of them, and that both of them had access to a collection of Sayings, now lost (and never known to exist), which is referred to by the symbol Q. All this remains unproved, and the Abbot of Downside has recently published a searching indictment of the official theory. He points out that the phenomena which it sets out to explain can be explained more economically on another supposition; that Matthew wrote first, and that the other two had access to his Gospel, either in its present form or in a form little different.

If Mark and Luke had both simply followed Matthew, each supplementing the narrative from his own private information, the pattern of their divergences would have been a simple one. But it seems clear that Luke *also* used Mark. All through the earlier part of the story, Mark and Luke agree as against Matthew, in some detail, about the order in which they place the events. This would naturally happen if Luke regarded Mark as a better authority where the purely historical setting was concerned, and suspected (or knew) that Matthew had placed the events in an artificial order of his own, to secure (e.g.) some kind of rhetorical effect.

But is it necessary to suppose that Luke had Matthew's Gospel in front

## INTRODUCTION

of him *in its present form*? It does not seem impossible that somebody should have made a collection of our Lord's sayings, derived principally or even wholly from Matthew's Gospel, and that Luke should have made use of this, without having access to Matthew in its full form. This view differs from the view commonly held, inasmuch as "Q" (if we like to call it so) is no longer regarded as a document on which Matthew is based, but as a document based on Matthew. And it would explain all the really puzzling features of Synoptic criticism. It would explain (i) why Luke regularly follows Mark, not Matthew, in the incidents which he relates and in the order of his relating them; he followed Mark because he had no access to Matthew. It would explain (ii) why Luke so often disagrees with Matthew about the context of a saying, although the wording of it hardly varies at all; the document in his possession was based on Matthew's text, but it was not at pains to give the various sayings in their historical order. It would explain (iii) why we so often get the impression, in these cases, that Matthew, not Luke, has given us our Lord's words in their true setting; Matthew depended on memories, or on a tradition, which recorded them in their historical context, whereas Luke had to fit them into his narrative as best he could. At the same time, it is free from all those objections which Abbot Butler makes against the "documentary hypothesis" which has hitherto been fashionable.

Some such explanation as this I have had in my mind all through the commentary which follows. But I have done my best not to impose it on the reader; wherever the importance of the subject seems to demand it, I have indicated the conclusions which logically follow if we suppose that Mark, not Matthew, wrote first. It is inevitable that any commentator who writes about the first three Gospels should have his own approach to the difficult question of interdependence. It is undesirable that any commentator, unless his credentials are of the very highest order, should write as if his own approach were the only possible one.

## MATTHEW

The traditional account of what happened is that Matthew wrote first, and in Aramaic—the developed dialect of Hebrew which was spoken by the Jews of his day. It is doubtful whether his Gospel ever had any



wide circulation in this form, of which no fragment has come down to us. Perhaps he only wrote it in his own language for convenience, and had it translated into Greek at once by some more competent Hellenist. Those who believe that Mark wrote first are naturally inclined to discredit the story of an original Aramaic Matthew; if Mark's phrases had been rendered in Aramaic by Matthew, and then retranslated by some unknown hand into Greek, it is not likely that Matthew and Mark would exhibit such close verbal resemblance. But it is generally admitted that Matthew, as compared with the other two Synoptists, has the appearance of writing for his own fellow-countrymen. He is much interested in the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies; he does not stop to explain Jewish customs or titles; and there is a kind of primitiveness about his style of narration which makes him the ideal bridge between the Old Testament and the New. For him Jerusalem is still "the Holy City" (4.5, 27.53)—which is good evidence, if evidence were needed, that he wrote before the destruction of the place in A.D. 70. On two occasions (27.8, 28.15) he speaks of local Jewish customs persisting "till this day", which suggests that his Gospel was either written or revised at a date considerably removed from the Crucifixion. But the inference is uncertain; cf. notes on the passages in question.

### MARK

It is easy to recognize Mark by his style, or lack of it; he is abrupt, careless of repetitions, and sometimes forced in his choice of words, like a man who thinks in Aramaic but is writing in Greek. Traditionally, he wrote in Rome, and could avail himself, occasionally at least, of St. Peter's own reminiscences. It is evident (cf. 7.3 and 4) that he wrote for Gentile readers, to whom Jewish terms and customs were unfamiliar. He covers the same ground as Matthew 3-28, but confines himself for the most part to the narration of events, omitting or curtailing the long paragraphs in which Matthew and Luke have preserved our Lord's teaching. Where he omits *incidents* which are found in Matthew, there is generally no difficulty in finding a reason why he should have done so. Where he disagrees with Matthew about the order of events, this is perhaps because his arrangement is less artificial. Not seldom, his descriptions are much fuller (e.g., in his sixth chapter, where he records

## INTRODUCTION

the death of St. John the Baptist), as if he were depending on some private source, while Matthew is only repeating a common tradition. We do not know whether Mark was personally a disciple of our Lord (but cf. notes on 14.51); it is clear in any case, from the Acts and from the epistles, that he was in close touch with the first Christians.

### LUKE

The pattern of Luke's Gospel is puzzling. From chapter 4 to chapter 9, verse 17, he follows Mark closely, apart from certain discourses, also found in Matthew, and two stories which are entirely his own. Then, in his ninth chapter, he suddenly breaks away from the Synoptic tradition; he tells us nothing about our Lord walking on the sea, about the controversy over purification, the Syrophenician woman, or the feeding of the Seven Thousand, but goes straight on to St. Peter's Confession, and the Transfiguration; two chapters of Mark have vanished. Then (as if to compensate for the gap) follow seven chapters in which we find only a few stray echoes of Mark. Indeed, the action of the story seems halted; the seven chapters are composed almost entirely of extracts from our Lord's teaching, some paralleled in Matthew, but in great part peculiar to Luke himself. The impression left on the reader is that Luke determined to write his Gospel to a particular measure; that between the Infancy and the Passion he meant to incorporate Mark, and devote the same space to non-Markan material; then, finding that his first half, derived from Mark, was getting too long, he cut it down by passing straight from the miracle of the Five Thousand to the Confession of St. Peter. We may be grateful, if so, that he did not decide to cut down his own material instead; it might have cost us the Good Samaritan, or the Prodigal Son.

Luke is distinguished from the other Synoptists by a higher degree of feminine interest, and by a kind of tenderness, of preoccupation with God's mercies, which suggests that there was a womanly note in his private sources. It is probable (see Acts 21.17 and 27.2) that the Evangelist was in Jerusalem while St. Paul was imprisoned there; it will have been at this time that he began, or at least collected material for, his Gospel. Probably he finished it in Rome, where Mark would be already current, during St. Paul's first imprisonment; Acts 1.1 evidently refers

to it, and Acts 28.30 suggests that the author has now brought history up to date. In the Gospel, as in the early part of Acts, Luke seems often to be translating, rather literally, from Aramaic sources, but his choice of vocabulary is that of a cultured writer. His interest in medical details throws a light on Colossians 4.14. There are certain touches which suggest that his approach is less "primitive" than that of Matthew and Mark; e.g., when he refers to the Hero of his work as "the Lord" instead of "Jesus".

### THE FOURTH GOSPEL

Once the Fourth Gospel is treated as a problem, it becomes an insoluble problem. In modern times, a vast amount of ingenuity has been spent in trying to read its secret; it has been matched, successively, against a background of Rabbinical Judaism, of Alexandrian philosophy, of early Gnosticism, of pagan mystery-cults, but always inconclusively. It is not merely that no two critics agree; no single critic has managed to account for all its eccentricities within the framework of a single formula. The picture which emerges is that of a profound theological treatise, composed late in the first or more probably early in the second century, by some unknown author who had a thesis to propound, and did so under the (now established) literary form of a "Gospel". It was not, evidently, a fisherman from Galilee who had the learning and the culture to leave such a monument behind him. Possibly the author may have been that "John the Elder" who is referred to by Papias (Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, 3.39.4 and 14) as a valuable source of early tradition. Such is the modern account of the matter.

Meanwhile, the author himself claims to be one of the first Apostles (see 13.23, 21.20-24), and there can be little doubt, from his artificial avoidance of the name all through his Gospel, that he claims to be John the Son of Zebedee. That he should have been called by Papias "the Elder" is natural enough (cf. II John 1.1, III John 1.1), if he survived all the other Apostles, just as the "elders" of a local church were commonly, in the first age, "foundation members" of that church. Eusebius' guess (naively supported by the existence of two alleged "tombs" at Ephesus) that there were two separate persons, either of whom could indifferently be referred to as one of the Elders or one of the Lord's

## INTRODUCTION

disciples, is based on a false construction of what Papias rather confusedly tells us. Not that Papias himself hesitates to identify the author of the Fourth Gospel with the son of Zebedee. If we follow tradition in this matter, we shall approach the Fourth Gospel from a wholly different angle, and the suspicion will arise in our minds that the Johannine problem is not really a problem at all.

The characteristics of the Gospel which will then seize upon our minds are these. It seems to be the reminiscences of a very old man, who has an old man's tricks of narration. He will recall, as if conjuring them up with difficulty, details about names and places and relationships which have nothing much to do with the story. He will give us little footnotes, as if to make sure that we are following; often unnecessary, often delayed instead of being put in their proper place. He will remember fragments of a conversation, passing on from this utterance to that by mere association of memory, instead of giving us a reasoned *précis* of the whole. He will alternately assume that we know the story already, and narrate it in meticulous detail. He will pass from one scene to another without giving us warning of the change. It is this atmosphere of detached reminiscence that gives the Gospel its literary character.

If we accept this approach, we see the author as a man of massive simplicity, doggedly retaining the memory of words spoken, deeds done, which at the time had passed only half-understood. It is true that, here and there, he will use images or even phrases which were current coin among subtler thinkers; "the Word", "the Life which was the Light of men", and so on. But these images are of a very simple kind; and a man easily falls into the jargon of his day without noticing it. (I see that in the first paragraph of this section I have written "against a background" and "within the framework of a single formula"; thirty years ago, neither I nor any other man would have used these tricks of phrase, which had not yet come into fashion.) John would not have spoken about "the Word" in the first verse of his Gospel, without a trace of explanation, if that term had not already been applied, in Christian language, to the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Because it was not a Pauline term, John has been gratuitously credited with the invention of it.



Several facts emerge from the reading of the Fourth Gospel, of which the Synoptists had given us no warning. One is, that our Lord did not come up to Jerusalem at the beginning of Holy Week as a stranger. His ministry was not begun and ended in a single year. He went up to Jerusalem for the feasts, and there, in the Temple, a little group of questioners would gather round him, very different in culture and in temper from the multitudes of Galilee. Before these, the Rabbis, it would seem that he discussed openly his claim to the Messiahship, and what that claim involved. He does not argue with them—there is far more argument in the Synoptists than in St. John; he taxes them openly with their blindness and their professional arrogance. Again, our Lord does not often talk to his Apostles, in the Synoptic record, the language of conscious Divinity (the obvious exception to this statement is Matthew 11.27, Luke 10.22). But the Fourth Gospel makes it clear that at the end of his life he made confidences to them (chapters 14 to 17) which, if John had not written, would have passed unrecorded.

In 21.24, and possibly in 19.35, another hand, not that of the author, has made its contribution (cf. Rom. 16.22). This raises the question whether we ought to think of John as sitting down and writing the Gospel with his own hand. It is improbable that one who was regarded as "a simple man, without learning" by his own fellow-countrymen (Acts 4.13) would have lived to write Greek as idiomatic as that of the Fourth Gospel. And if it was not John, but some disciple of his, who actually committed the record to paper, it is not impossible that this amanuensis may be responsible, in some degree, for the arrangement of the whole. Several scholars have laboured to prove that, through some very early accident in transmission, the various chapters have been disarranged. But such an accident would not easily happen; it is more probable that John's reminiscences were elicited from him piecemeal, through the insistent curiosity of his disciples; sometimes, it may be, only a few verses at a time. While John will have given general indications of the order in which the events occurred, he may not have lived to put the whole volume together in person; and there would be a special point in 21.23 and 24, if we suppose that he was already dead when the verses were written. Some of the apparent eccentricities in the record as it stands might be explained in this way. Further, if John thus recalled

## *INTRODUCTION*

incidents in our Lord's life at haphazard, we can understand why some of these, already notorious (and especially the institution of the Holy Eucharist), should have gone unmentioned; whereas the Miracle of the Five Thousand, equally well known, is reported at length to prepare the way for the discourses of chapter 6.

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW

1.1-17. *Our Lord's genealogy.* Our Lord's descent from David was recognized by his contemporaries (Mark 10.47); the details of it are here given in an official and apparently an incomplete form. Thus, in verse 8, Ozias is son of Joram, as in I Paralip. 3.11, whereas the Book of Kings represents him as Joram's great-grandson. The word "beget" was used not only of parents but of progenitors (Ruth 4.17). This foreshortening of perspective accounts for the briefness of Matthew's list as compared with Luke's (3.23-38). In taking over this record from his sources, the Evangelist noticed a coincidence about the number of names contained in it, which fell naturally into three groups of fourteen. (This reckoning is more easily obtained, if we suppose that the name of Joakim has somehow fallen out before that of his son Jechonias in verse 11; the two names would be much alike in the Aramaic.)

The word "beget" can also mean "adopt" (Gen. 50.22). Accordingly, both lists trace our Lord's ancestry through his foster-father. We are so accustomed to the idea of inheritance by birth, that we find it hard to enter into the mind of the ancient world, which attached more importance to recognition by the father than to physical parentage. In the same way Salathiel (verse 12) was perhaps adopted into the direct line of the Davidic family, though he was descended from Nathan, not from Solomon (Luke 3.31), and St. Joseph himself could reckon his descent from Zorobabel either through Jacob or through Heli (Luke 3.23). See further, notes on Luke 3.23-38.

1.18-25. *Our Lord's birth.* The wife passed into the power of her husband at the time of their betrothal; if the engagement was "broken off", it meant that the husband repudiated a woman who was legally bound to him. "She was found" does not, to a Hebrew ear, emphasize

the idea of discovery; "it proved", "the fact emerged" is the sense. What fact emerged? That she was with child by the power of the Holy Ghost? Or merely the fact that she was with child? Some would take the former view, supposing that our Lady communicated to St. Joseph, there and then, the events of Luke 1.26-38. But Matthew's account, especially verse 20, suggests that St. Joseph had only an inkling, at best, about the true state of the case. It is not difficult to suppose that some instinct or some direct command induced our Lady to treasure up Gabriel's message and reflect on it in her heart.

In describing St. Joseph as a right-minded man (which would normally mean a faithful observer of the Law), does the text imply that he was too right-minded to proceed with the marriage? Or are we to understand that he was too right-minded to bring disgrace on his betrothed by a public repudiation? There is no agreement among the commentators about this. Nor is it clear whether verses 22 and 23 are part of the Angel's utterance; there is the same doubt about 21.4 and 26.56. "The virgin" is the sense of the Greek; but in the original Hebrew "a virgin" would be equally possible; nor does the Hebrew term necessarily involve, though it commonly implies, virginity.

It is misleading to translate, in verse 25, "he did not know her until she bore a son", the word "until" having a force in our language which is unknown to its Hebrew equivalent. In I Mach. 5.54 (to quote a single instance out of many) it would be absurd to render "none of them had fallen until they all returned safe and sound". The Greeks, too, had this usage; "they sent away the envoys before hearing them" (Thucydides 2.12). No argument, therefore, can be derived from this turn of speech against the doctrine of our Lady's perpetual virginity. Nor does the phrase "her first-born" imply, in this context, that she had other sons afterwards; it is evidently meant to inform us that she had had no sons before, and was therefore under the obligations mentioned in Luke 2.22-24. Some of the best Greek manuscripts omit the word "first-born".

2.1-12. *Coming of the Wise Men.* The Greek word here used for a star would apply only to a single celestial body, not to any conjunction of them. But this point is not decisive if the Gospel was first written in

Aramaic. It is still possible, therefore, to hold that the Magi observed the conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn on May 20th, 6 B.C., and after arriving in Judaea saw it again (cf. verse 10) when it reappeared on October 27th. But most modern authors either suppose the providential appearance of a comet, or regard the whole occurrence as miraculous and understand verse 9 in a strictly literal sense. "Out in the east" evidently means "when we were out in the east"; the star appeared to the west of them. But some think the Greek should be rendered, "We have seen the star at its rising".

According to our existing Hebrew text, the prophecy of Michaeas (5.2) should read "And thou, Bethlehem, of the land of Juda, art small among the clans of Juda"; presumably a variant text was current in Matthew's time. It is noticeable that in spite of his fondness for acclaiming the fulfilment of prophecy he does not make the most of the Magi's visit, but treats it as mere matter of fact (cf. Num. 24.17, Ps. 71.10, Is. 60.6). Verse 9 suggests that the Magi did not *follow* the star in their journey from the east; they had interpreted its first appearance as the presage of a great king's birth in Judaea, and were delighted, on their arrival, to see it again, as if confirming their hopes. The "dwelling" into which they entered may have been the stable; usage does not demand that we should understand it of a furnished house.

2.13-23. *The flight and the massacre.* The flight into Egypt, like the visit of the Magi, is not mentioned by St. Luke. When did it happen, and how long a time did it occupy? If we assume that the year of our Lord's birth was 4 B.C., which was the year of Herod's death, it is simplest to suppose that the residence in Egypt was only a matter of a few days, between the Circumcision and the Presentation (Luke 2.21,22). If we assign an earlier date to our Lord's birth, it is more natural to suppose that the Flight into Egypt took place *after* the Presentation. But by that time, according to the obvious interpretation of Luke 2.39, the Holy Family had returned to Nazareth, and Nazareth, not Bethlehem, should have been the scene of the Magi's visit. We can only be certain that the residence in Egypt did not begin before 8 B.C. (the earliest date suggested for our Lord's birth) or end later than 4 B.C. See further, notes on Luke 2.21-39.



The massacre of the Innocents has not been recorded by any secular writer. But it would hardly be considered important as compared with the other barbarous actions of King Herod; there is no reason why we should suppose the Holy Innocents to be more than twenty or thirty in number (cf. notes on Luke 13.1-9). The final verse of this chapter has given rise to much difficulty, since the prophecy cannot be traced. Some see an allusion to Is. 11.1, where the Messias is described as a Branch (*netser*). Others suppose that Nazareth was proverbially an insignificant town, and that our Lord's residence there was symbolic of his rejection by his people; "he shall be called provincial". Others, in spite of a difficulty of Hebrew orthography, understand a play upon words between "Natsarene" and "Nazirite". There is, in point of fact, no Old Testament passage where the Messias is identified as a Nazirite. But is it certain that "he" refers to our Lord? St. Joseph is the subject of the sentence, and the patriarch Joseph is called a Nazirite, not indeed by the prophets, but by the prophecy of Jacob in Gen. 49.26.

3.1-17. *St. John's preaching and the Baptism of our Lord.* So far, Matthew's narrative, although consistent with Luke's, does not overlap with it; there is nothing in Mark to correspond with either. But at this point, as will appear from a glance at Mark 1 or Luke 3, our first three Gospels cover the same ground, and largely in the same words. A closer analysis will shew that, roughly, all three are alike in verses 1-3, 5, 6, 11 and 16-17; Matthew corresponds with Mark in verse 4, and with Luke in verses 7-10, 12 and 13; verses 14 and 15 are peculiar to Matthew. The "Synoptic problem" thus created continues to exercise the ingenuity of critics all through the rest of the narrative, though less noticeably after the Resurrection. Is there a common source underlying these close resemblances? If so, was it written, or passed on by word of mouth? Or did any Evangelist have the work of an earlier Evangelist in front of him as he wrote, in part at least? And if so, in what order of precedence?

Verses 14 and 15 record a remarkable tribute paid to our Lord by St. John. The question naturally arises, if Mark and Luke had these verses before them when they wrote, either in the text of Matthew or in some source which they shared with Matthew, why did Mark and Luke

suppress them? On the contrary supposition, that Matthew was using (say) Mark, or a source which he shared with Mark, no difficulty arises. Matthew had an additional, private source of information which enabled him to give the facts about St. John's protest and our Lord's rejoinder to it. The same kind of problem continually recurs all through the Gospels. If Matthew wrote first, was his Gospel available either to Mark or to Luke in its present, full form?

Matthew is also alone in preserving for us the formula given in verse 2. Pious Jews of our Lord's time believed, on the authority of the prophets, that a Messiah would come and set up a kingdom of universal justice and peace. But the prelude to the setting-up of this kingdom would be a time of great affliction, especially for the Jewish race. St. John's baptism was evidently meant to seal his converts as citizens of the future kingdom; it was not a mere cleansing from ceremonial defilement, such as was bestowed by the Jews on their proselytes. It seems clear that some inspiration must have dictated to him the practice of the rite, which was not provided for in any of the old prophecies. The effects of it are considered in the note on Mark 1.4.

For our Lord's Baptism, see notes on John 1.19-34.

4.1-11. *Our Lord's temptation.* "Temptation" in the Bible commonly means "testing"—that and nothing more. It does not mean trying to induce a person to do something, but merely putting an opportunity in his way and seeing whether he does it or not. Satan did not think he would be able to make the Incarnate Son of God do wrong; he put Jesus of Nazareth to a series of tests, to see whether he was the Incarnate Son of God or not. What he expected our Lord's reactions to be, and whether he drew the right inference from them, we are naturally not told. Matthew's arrangement of the story suggests a growing doubt: "You cannot be the Son of God, or you would not be hungry . . . You cannot be the Son of God, or you would not be afraid . . . Since you are not the Son of God, you may as well fall down and worship me". See further, notes on Luke 4.1-13.

Did the change of scene take place in real fact, or only in the imagination? When the prophets speak of being transported from place to place, we may sometimes suspect that it was only in a vision; e.g., the

visit of Jeremias (who was in Jerusalem) to the Euphrates in Jer. 13.5. But these experiences are related in the first person, and we expect the events to be described as they appeared to the subject of them. Our Lord's Temptation, though the narrative of it must have come from himself, is described from the outside, and in terms which suggest that it happened in literal fact. And indeed it is easier to imagine the devil having power to transport our Lord bodily from place to place, than having power to suggest images to his mind.

It is difficult not to believe that our Lord's forty days in the wilderness are in some sense a mystical repetition of the forty years during which Israel was a nomad people. The three temptations (of gratifying sense, of presuming on God's mercies, of making terms with the "rulers of this world") are very much those given in I Cor. 10.6-10; and our Lord's replies are all taken from the book of Deuteronomy. Verse 7 means, of course, that we are not to "tempt Providence"; a man who knows himself to be under God's special protection is guilty of presumption, if he deliberately runs into great danger and dares God (as it were) to leave him unbefriended.

4.12-25. *First preaching in Galilee; call of the Apostles; the crowds gather.* Although our Lord came to the house of Israel, he drew attention to the universality of his message by delivering it in those parts of Palestine (i.e., in the north) where there was a less sharp division between Jew and Gentile than in Judaea proper.

The call of the Apostles here described is obviously different from, and later than, the event described in John 1.35-42. Whether it was earlier than, or identical with, the event described in Luke 5.1-11, is more questionable; see notes there.

It is a pity that verses 23-25 have been included in chapter 4. They are evidently meant to be a sort of rubric for the three chapters which follow, and to explain why our Lord went up on to the mountain-side, in search of privacy.

5.1-16. *The Beatitudes.* Luke (6.17 and following) gives us what appears to be an abridged version of this sermon. But, as if to emphasize the fact that it is a different sermon, he tells us that our Lord

came down from the mountain and stood in the plain. It may well be that both Matthew and Luke (or perhaps the sources on which they depended) have collected here a number of sayings uttered on different occasions, and only the torso of the sermon belongs to the occasion mentioned. As a rule, when Matthew and Luke cover the same ground the verbal resemblances are close; here, the verbal resemblances are distant, and sometimes the whole bearing of a text differs. It seems likely that our Lord preached two different sermons, or rather one sermon in two different "states".

The beatitudes are a new set of values, which are those of God's approaching kingdom, the Christian Church. Only in proportion as we assimilate their point of view do we become full citizens of the new world. "Poor in spirit" refers, not precisely to humility, but to an attitude of dependence on God and detachment from earthly supports. "Holiness" in verse 6 is literally "justness", which means (here as usually in the Bible) being in a covenant-relation with God, and so enjoying his favour.

Verses 13-16 do not *necessarily* belong to this context; the substance of them appears later in our Lord's teaching both in Mark (4.21, 9.49) and in Luke. But it may well be that our Lord is emphasizing the words "because of me", in verse 11. The fact that Christians are treated as outlaws must not make them bad citizens of the world; on the contrary, it is all-important that they should set a good example to their heathen neighbours (cf. I Peter 2.12).

5.17-26. *The fifth Commandment restated.* Our Lord brings the law to perfection by concentrating attention on the motive underlying actions rather than on the actions themselves. Hatred of any kind is constructive murder. It is doubtful whether verse 22 is meant to represent a scale of comparative values; the main point in any case is that a mere disposition of the mind can be guilty. Verses 20-24 are found only in Matthew; verses 25 and 26 occur also in Luke (12.58) in a quite different connexion, and it may be doubted whether they are in place here. They appeal to motives of human prudence, and the suggestion seems to be that divine punishments, like human punishments, are easily incurred if we do not take early measures to put things right.



5.27-32. *The sixth Commandment restated.* The first two verses here obviously belong to the main argument. Verses 29 and 30 interrupt it, verses 31 and 32 are quite off the point. Since all four verses belong to different contexts in other Gospels, they may have been inserted here merely as illustrations of our Lord's general attitude about impurity. Verses 29 and 30 are to be understood, not literally, but as a kind of surgical metaphor; it may be necessary to forgo something in itself good, for the sake of a more comprehensive good, just as it is sometimes necessary to amputate a limb as the only means of saving the whole body. The passage about divorce has to be compared with other similar passages, Matthew 19.1-12, etc.; see notes there. If 5.32 stood by itself, it would create no difficulty. The word rendered "setting aside" does not mean "except"; it should mean "over and above", "in addition to", and the sense should be "over and above the question of keeping a mistress (as he does when he marries again), he is turning his divorced wife into an adulteress (when she marries again, as she probably will)". But it is not clear that a comparison with 19.9 supports this interpretation.

5.33-37. *The second Commandment restated.* Only in Matthew. The citizen of the new kingdom, who loves his fellows too well to need a warning against murder, and guards his senses too well to run the risk of committing adultery, is also too frank and truthful to need the use of oaths; his word is his bond. The form of our Lord's utterance suggests that he is thinking especially of those disingenuous formulas which left a loop-hole for perjury by not *explicitly* mentioning the name of God; cf. 23.16-22 below, where he attacks the insincerity of the Pharisaic teaching in this respect.

5.38-48. *The seventh Commandment restated.* The citizen of the new kingdom, so far from being eager to get his own back, is eager to give his own property away. He is not content with that false generosity which always expects a *quid pro quo*, a generosity which is practised not only by the children of the Old Law, but by the very heathens. The whole of this section appears in Luke's "Sermon on the Plain", although his choice of vocabulary is here curiously unlike Matthew's throughout. (Luke 6.27-35.) In verse 43 the words "and hate thy enemy" are perhaps



a gloss which had been introduced into the sacred text; they do not appear in Lev. 19.18, a passage which is only concerned with the positive duty of love for one's fellow-citizens. The implication of verse 45 is that God is impartial both in his chastisements and in his mercies; the cruel heat of the sun is a burden from which the just are not exempt, the welcome appearance of rain brings comfort equally to the unjust. This seems to be indicated by the order of the words, and it is the divine impartiality that is proposed to us as our model; in Luke we are told more explicitly to be merciful as our Father is merciful.

6.1-18. *Ostentatious piety condemned.* The first eighteen verses of this chapter are peculiar to Matthew, except for the Paternoster. But they evidently fit well into the framework of the Sermon on the Mount; we are still concerned with the relation of motives to actions; as actions can only be called bad, so they can only be called good, when we are in a position to pronounce on the motives which inspired them. The man who expects to get a return of admiration from his pieties, like the man who expects to get a return of gratitude for his hospitality, has had his reward already.

Whether the Paternoster is in place here is another question. Its context in Luke (11.1) is different, and verses 14 and 15 plainly break the whole structure of the Sermon. It may be, of course, that only verses 14 and 15 belong elsewhere, but the unity of the discourse is improved if you pass straight from verse 6 to verse 16. The emphasis of verses 7 to 15 is not on the need to make your prayer unostentatious, but on the need to make it simple; and it is not the Pharisees, it is the heathens, we must forbear to imitate. "Use many phrases", literally "stammer"; it is hard to see why this should mean praying at great length, and although it might mean saying the same prayer a great many times over, what prayer has ever been said so many times over as the Paternoster? It seems possible that it refers to a special heathen superstition, which held that it was all-important to address your God by the right title, the one he wanted to be addressed by at the moment. (Cf. Milton's imitation, "Hail holy Light, offspring of Heaven first-born! or hearst thou rather, pure ethereal Stream", etc., as if it were all-important which title you used to approach the Deity.) The "much speaking" which our Lord

deprecates would thus be the inventiveness of the heathen poets in devising new forms of invocation.

The word "daily" in verse 11 is represented in the Latin text of Matthew (but not of Luke) by "supersubstantial", a rival guess at the sense of the Greek term, which does not occur elsewhere. "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" is a more accurate rendering than the one we are accustomed to; but neither Catholic nor Protestant translators of the Bible have been able to displace the old pre-Reformation formula. Certain manuscripts add at the end of the prayer, "For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever, Amen", but this is probably a liturgical addition which has crept in.

6.19-34. *On worldly cares.* The passage about the single eye, verses 22 and 23, appears in a different context in Luke (see note on Luke 11.34). Is it in place here? No doubt there may be a reference to covetousness; a "good eye" is used in Hebrew as the symbol of generosity, and "simple" can have the sense of "generous". But "a simple eye" is nowhere found in this connexion, and it is doubtful whether the interpretation would have suggested itself, but for the proximity of verses 21 and 24. Taken in isolation, the passage suggests rather an assertion of the principle *corruptio optimi pessima*; if the faith, the principle of action, by which a man lives is a distorted one, even his most generous instincts are placed at the service of evil—Saul of Tarsus persecuting the Church of Christ. But it may be that the distorting influence of riches on the character is directly envisaged.

Verses 25-34 are a continuous passage in Luke, marked by the strongest possible verbal resemblance (Luke 12.22-31). They are not, however, part of his "Sermon on the Plain". Here, as in so much of his teaching, our Lord lays violent emphasis on a contrast, and there is a danger of interpreting him too literally; a tendency among the first Christians to throw up their employment and wait in complete idleness for the Second Coming is rebuked by St. Paul (II Thess. 3.10-12). In verse 27, "height" could equally well be rendered "age"; and some think that "cubit" is used by a metaphor to indicate an added span of life.

7.1-14. *Various warnings.* Verses 1-5 form part of St. Luke's "Sermon on the Plain", following immediately on "Be merciful, then, as your Father is merciful". We are discouraged, not from acting in a judicial capacity when occasion arises, but from a habit of censorious criticism; and the "judgement" with which we are threatened is not so much the tribunal of Christ at his Coming, as the verdict which is being passed on our actions, from moment to moment, by the all-seeing eye of divine Justice. Verse 6 does not seem to belong either to what precedes or to what follows; it is found only in St. Matthew, and no other saying attributed to our Lord illustrates it. We can only take it as it stands, and interpret it in the most general sense as a caution against bestowing Christian privileges on unworthy persons, who (perhaps by causing scandal) will make a poor return for our confidence.

The rest of this passage occurs in St. Luke, but not in the same context. Luke has a curious variant in verse 11 (see note on Luke 11.13). Verse 12 would clearly fall into place better if it came immediately after verse 5. Our Lord's warning about the need of entering in through the narrow gate is represented in Luke (13.23) as the answer to a direct question, "Lord, is it only a few that are to be saved?", and all we are told is that the gate is narrow, and many will not be able to find it. He seems deliberately to avoid a statistical treatment of the subject. We may hope, then, that the divine mercies are large enough to counteract the fatal tendency of our fallen nature which Matthew's version of the utterance throws into such strong relief.

7.15-28. *On practical discipleship.* The substance of Luke's "Sermon on the Plain" corresponds with Matthew's "Sermon on the Mount" in this final section, but the resemblances are not verbal ones. This simple appeal for an attitude of practical discipleship is evidently a fitting close to a long discourse, capable of being used more than once. The "prophets" of verse 15 may be our Lord's own contemporaries; cf. John 10.8. Verse 22 raises a question for the theologians, whether genuine miracles can be performed by men who do not hold the true faith; if they can, what becomes of the evidential argument from miracles? But the present passage does not necessarily assert more than that miracles

can be done through the agency of Christians who will not, in fact, attain eternal life. The word used for "authority" in verse 29 has commonly the sense of freedom from superior control; no doubt what chiefly struck our Lord's hearers was the fact that he spoke in his own name instead of quoting the views of earlier teachers, as was the custom of the Rabbis.

8.1-17. *Leprosy, palsy and fever cured.* This single passage is an admirable illustration of the difficulties presented by the "Synoptic problem". Matthew describes the healing of the leper before that of Simon's mother-in-law, Mark reverses the order. If either Evangelist had the text of the other in front of him, how to account for this curious inversion? One thing seems certain, and that is that Matthew possessed information which connected the healing of the leper with the descent from the mountain of the beatitudes.

It is not clear that our Lord meant the leper to keep silent about his cure altogether. The point is perhaps rather that he should shew himself to the priests before he held any converse with the world in general. (So, in Mark 16.8, "they said nothing to anyone" evidently means "they said nothing to anyone on their way back to Jerusalem".) The Law must be observed, and the Law declared the leper an outcast until the priests had given him a clean bill of health. Does "to make the truth known to them" go with "shew thyself to the priest"? Or with "Moses ordained"? And on the former supposition, what truth is indicated? That the man had been cured by a miracle? Or that our Lord had not come to destroy the Law? The last-mentioned explanation is perhaps to be preferred.

The centurion was probably conscious that our Lord would lose caste as a Jew by entering his house; none the less, his humility is genuine. His point is, of course, that one who so dominates the forces of nature must be able, like a general at head-quarters, to dominate them at a distance. We should expect, "I too know what it is to command"; but after all, the centurion is only a cog in the machine; upwards or downwards, the principle of subordination is part of the air he breathes. See Luke 7.1-10 for a similar incident, and its apparent discrepancies. It is not clear from verses 14 and 15 whether St. Peter was at this time



a married man or a widower; nothing further is heard about his married life (cf. note on I Cor. 9.5). Verse 17 has its difficulties; the passage in Isaias here quoted means, not that the Messias will heal the sick, but that he will take the weaknesses of humanity upon himself, by way of expiation. It appears, therefore, that Matthew is looking forward. If our Lord won such an easy triumph over suffering when he met it in others, the sufferings he underwent himself must have been a weight which he took upon himself deliberately.

8.18-34. *Crossing the Lake; the storm and the exorcism.* The scribe's utterance is generally understood as a Quixotic undertaking to follow our Lord to the ends of the earth. But it need mean no more than, "Master, I am coming with you to whatever house it is you are making for", and the reply seems to make it clear that this was the sense in which our Lord understood him. Our Lord's saying about leaving the dead to bury their dead is perhaps meant to suggest that you leave the dead world behind you when you choose the kingdom of light; but the phrasing of it is obscure, and may have been proverbial. It is not clear whether we are to think of the father as already dead, or as in extreme old age or sickness. See also Luke 9.57-60.

The storm on the lake, followed by the exorcism on the further shore, is given by Mark and Luke as a sequel to the parable of the Sower, which we shall not meet in Matthew till chapter 13. Curiously, Mark insists that it was on the evening of the same day, Luke will not be pinned down to a definite time, and Matthew, as we see, appears to antedate it. As before, it is difficult to see why there should be such deviations, if any of the Evangelists were in a position to consult the text of the others, and a common source, inexact about dates, would more naturally explain the difficulties of this particular chapter.

Matthew speaks of two possessed persons here, as of two blind men in 20.30. In the present case, it is easiest to suppose that the second person was a woman, who would play a secondary rôle in the story. The story itself presents difficulties, just because we know so little about the nature of diabolical possession. We have no right to conclude that brute animals can normally be subject to possession, nor can we be certain in what precise way the spirits exercised their control over the swine. From



the analogy of the fig-tree in chapter 21 we may guess that what our Lord did was done by way of demonstration; the disciples, fresh from the relief of making land safely after the storm, should be further impressed by a vivid object lesson. It shewed them the tremendous powers enjoyed by those forces of evil against which they would have to fight, and at the same time assured them that even the forces of evil enjoy no powers which are not subject to the permissive will of God.

9.1-17. *The palsied man; call of St. Matthew; two difficulties answered.* These three sections come together, and in the same order, in all three Gospels. Matthew curiously omits the circumstance of the bed being let down through the roof, which seems the natural explanation of the words "seeing their faith". Would he have done so, on the supposition that all three Evangelists were using a common source here?

Only Matthew has noticed that our Lord left Nazareth and made Capharnaum his permanent head-quarters. And now he will even refer to it as our Lord's "own" city. The reason, no doubt, for this concentration of interest is that it was St. Matthew's city too (verse 9). It is "easier" to say "thy sins are forgiven" in the sense that you can say it with less fear of contradiction; the bystanders cannot know (as they could in the other case) whether you are telling the truth or not. It is not certain that we ought to print "Son of Man" with capital letters here; our Lord may mean simply "human agents", his statement being quite general. But it would be unnecessary in that case to add "on earth", and the sense is more probably that the Son of Man has judicial powers *even while he is on earth*; that he will have such powers when he comes on the clouds of heaven, no one is likely to dispute.

It seems to have been common among our Lord's disciples, and indeed among the early Christians generally, to take a new name in memory of one's conversion. Whereas Mark and Luke preserve historical accuracy, and call the publican "Levi", Matthew himself already thinks of himself as "Matthew", a point which has psychological value. Our Lord may have had a house in Capharnaum which was regularly placed at his disposal, but "the house" here is Matthew's house, according to

the clear statement of Luke. "Sinners" was a term in use among the Jews to describe their Gentile neighbours; but here the context seems to indicate that they were social outcasts. It is doubtful whether Osee, in the passage from which our Lord quotes, had love of one's neighbour consciously in mind. "A tender heart wins favour with me, not sacrifice; God's acknowledging, not victim's destroying"—the parallelism between the two halves of the sentence suggests that a "tender heart" merely means a timorous conscience in general, and this would be a quite possible Hebrew usage. But our Lord was clearly within his rights if he insisted on giving a fuller meaning to the ambiguous word; the prophet may have been inspired to say more than he meant.

Luke (5.33) seems to regard the question about fasting as a new objection raised by the Pharisees; Matthew attributes it to the disciples of John; Mark, as if by way of harmonizing the two accounts, represents it as a joint *démarche* from both. Whatever be the explanation of this small inconsistency, it is very unlikely that Matthew's account is derivative. As if conscious that the criticism has been launched from two different angles, our Lord defends himself against each in turn. His disciples do not as yet fast like John's disciples, because they have not yet, like John's disciples, lost the companionship of their Master. They do not observe the fasts which the Pharisees observe, because these belong to an older Covenant, which is to be superseded. We can hardly doubt that the parable of the new wine and the old bottles has this sense; and presumably the parable of the new patch is only a variant, "It is not for me to patch up the weaknesses of the Judaic system". The words "that would take away from the cloak all its pattern" are an attempt to render the Vulgate Latin, which seems based on a faulty interpretation of the Greek. The sense of the Greek is, probably, "the new piece draws away threads from the old".

9.18-26. *Jairus' daughter, and the issue of blood*. Mark and Luke, as in 8.23 sqq., seem to assign this paragraph to a later period in the ministry. Nor do they tell the story in quite the same way. The actual news of the girl's death, it seems, only reached Jairus through a messenger when our Lord was already on his way to the house. But Matthew shews, here

as elsewhere, a determination to be concise, and may have foreshortened the actual course of events with that aim in view. (These nine verses of Matthew represent 23 in Mark and 16 in Luke.)

9.27-34. *Further miracles.* Here Matthew seems to be using a source peculiar to himself, but he is still (you feel) in a hurry. It is as if he were turning over a catalogue of miracles at random, and picking out one here, one there, but always eager to get back to our Lord's teaching as soon as possible. The blind men are obviously different from the blind men at the end of chapter 20. Here the injunction of silence perhaps means that our Lord's fame was spreading too rapidly; there were limits to the number of people who could follow him without embarrassing his movements. Verse 34 is only a kind of foot-note supplied from 12.24, perhaps by an editor.

9.35-10.4. *The Apostles chosen.* There is little difference between the first three Gospels about their lists of the Apostles. There are slight variations of order, and Luke has two singularities of nomenclature, calling Thaddaeus by his better-known name of Judas, and translating the word "Cananaean" by its Greek equivalent, Zelotes. Some manuscripts give "Lebbaeus", or "Lebbaeus who is called Thaddaeus" as the tenth Apostle in Matthew's list.

10.5-15. *The terms of their mission.* It seems to have been the antecedent will of God that the Jews should repent before the message of the Gospel was published to the Gentiles. On this errand—a vain one, as it proved—the Apostles are now being sent; and the directions given are not, so far as we know, meant to apply to that later mission on which they were sent after the Ascension. The apostolic form of living which is dictated to them is based, not on any ascetic principle, but on that of trust in Providence. At first sight, it would appear from verse 10 that they were to travel without staff or shoes; but in Mark they are directed to take both—evidently Matthew means they are not to carry a special staff or a second pair of shoes. These, like the money and food they need, will be provided for them by the generosity of those who listen to them; the labourer has a right to his maintenance. (Here

it is neither Matthew nor Luke, but Mark, who seems to have worked over the original tradition and made its implications more intelligible; see notes on Mark 6.7-13.) They are not, however, to demand any payment for the instruction they give; they have learned, themselves, in the free school of Rabbi Jesus.

10.16-42. *Further directions about apostleship.* These utterances mostly appear in different contexts in Mark and Luke; it may be that Matthew has collected them here, simply as having a bearing on the apostolate. We cannot be certain, therefore, that the context will help us in interpreting the difficult passages, even when these are peculiar to Matthew. One of these is verse 23; does it really apply, like the directions given in the last paragraph, to the brief mission of the Apostles during our Lord's life-time? We might be inclined to think so, from the circumstance that the cities "of Israel" are mentioned. But the direction to "take flight" seems to envisage a larger body of Christians than verse 14 above, and it is better to give the prophecy a longer perspective. Even so, what does it mean? Some think it is merely a promise that, whatever persecutions may arise, there will always be a refuge somewhere for exiled Christians until the end of time. But why, in that case, cities "of Israel"? More probably the sense is that the Jewish nation will still be deaf to the Christian message when disaster overtakes it in A.D. 70; cf. note on Matthew 24.34.

The other difficult passage is verse 41, which again is peculiar to Matthew; the suggestion that it is a variant of Mark 9.37 is wholly unconvincing. Do the terms "prophet" and "just man" represent an ascending or a descending scale? Or are they, in spite of the apparent rhetoric of the passage, mere synonyms? And does "in the name of" mean "because he bears the character of" (the sense adopted in the translation given here), or can it mean "as the representative of"? The neighbourhood of verse 40 would point to the latter conclusion; but then we cannot be certain whether the two verses were really part of the same discourse. For "prophets and just men" as synonyms, cf. Matthew 13.17 (where Luke has "prophets and kings"). The sense is presumably that if you harbour a missionary you count (in God's eyes) as a missionary yourself; but the thought is puzzlingly expressed.



The remainder of the passage, most of which is to be found in Mark and practically all in Luke, presents few difficulties. In verse 18 "and before the Gentiles" is perhaps the only direct reference (apart from Matthew 28.19) made in our Lord's teaching to the universality of the Christian message, so often alluded to indirectly. Jewish persecutors will appeal to Gentile authorities to suppress the infant Church, and this will force the Gentiles, too, to have an attitude about it. His secret doctrine on the subject, conveyed by parables, is perhaps referred to in verse 27. In verse 39 the word "secures" (literally "finds") is peculiar to Matthew, and so again in 16.25; it is perhaps a Hebraism (cf. Is. 57.10) which has been translated literally in Matthew and more freely by Mark and Luke.

11.1-19. *Our Lord and his Fore-runner.* None of this is in Mark, practically all of it in Luke, though verse 12 occurs in a different context (16.16). We are not bound to suppose that St. John had lost his belief in our Lord's Messiahship; his question can be taken ironically, "If you are really the Christ, why do you not behave as the Christ is expected to behave?"—that is, "Why is your coming on the clouds of heaven still delayed?" There is no evidence at all that we ought to translate, "Art thou the Coming one?" as if this had been a recognized title of the Messiah. Our Lord replies by calling attention to his miracles, which are already beginning to sketch in the outlines of the prophetic picture, though other parts of it still await fulfilment. "Who does not lose confidence", literally, "who is not scandalized"—his faith is not tripped up by the unexpectedness of our Lord's behaviour.

When the messengers have gone, our Lord treats his audience like a class of school-children. He gives them an easy question first, "Why did you go out to see John? Did you expect to find a great nobleman?" And then, when they think they all know the right answer, "No, a prophet!" he tells them that they are wrong again; John is not just *a* prophet, he is *the* Fore-runner. Why does our Lord alter the form of Malachy's prophecy, which runs "I am sending my messenger (or, angel) who is to prepare the way before me?" And, granted that he did so on this occasion, why does Mark (1.2) give the quotation in the amended form elsewhere, as if on his own responsibility? Some think

that a collection of prophecies about the Messiah was current at the time when the Evangelists wrote, in which Malachy's utterance may have been deliberately fused with Ex. 23.20, "And now I am sending my messenger to go before thee and guard thee on thy way". If this is the true explanation, we should perhaps read verse 10 not as part of our Lord's utterance, but as a foot-note added by the Evangelist to the words "more than a prophet"; verse 14 below would justify this procedure (cf. Mal. 4.5). It is, however, conceivable that our Lord adapted the quotation so as to make it apply to himself, as the Son of God was entitled to do; in that case, we may suspect that the text of Mark 1.2 was altered by copyists so as to make it agree with the formula given in Matthew and Luke.

The words "least" and "greater" read strangely nowadays, because we are accustomed to think of "greatness" as the description of a man's inner character. But by Hebrew usage "greater than he" is equivalent to the phrase "more highly privileged than he"; and in this sense it is not difficult to understand the comparison made. The two following verses seem to allege the reason for it. Under the new Dispensation the kingdom of heaven is open to all comers, you can jostle your way in as you will, whereas up to, and including, the ministry of St. John the Baptist, the world was still under the old Dispensation—the kingdom of heaven was something prophesied in the future, not something to be realized here and now. Some commentators would understand, not "is open to force", but "is treated with violence" (by its enemies). But this rendering seems quite inapplicable to the context of the saying in Matthew, and does little to throw light on it in Luke 16.16. "If you will make room for it in your minds" is no doubt meant to guard against a misunderstanding. Our Lord's hearers might easily imagine that if St. John was really Elias, the Second Coming was immediately to be expected. But in fact Malachy had foretold, at least by implication, the appearance of St. John as the herald of the *First* Coming; and a mental adjustment had therefore to be made, if our Lord's meaning was to be properly understood. See also notes on 7.9-13 below.

The parable of the children in the market-place is attached by Luke, as by Matthew, to the foregoing series of utterances about St. John the Baptist. But it may be only the occurrence of his name that has made a

connecting link; there does not seem to be any clear transition of thought. Evidently the words given in verse 17 are the refrain of an actual song, perhaps the accompaniment of a game. The concluding words of verse 19 have never been satisfactorily explained. "And wisdom was vindicated (shewn to be in the right) from her children"; the natural way of taking this rather unnatural turn of speech would be "And (yet) in either case the true principles of religion were being illustrated, by the asceticism of St. John, and by cheerful acceptance of God's gifts on my part". Luke has "all her children", which would underline the point of this interpretation. But it would seem that Luke (7.29 and 30) gave the saying a twist of his own; his explanation appears to be "And (all the time) the real representatives of wisdom, plain folk and publicans, were acclaiming the manifestation of God's wisdom (in John and Jesus alike)"; the same Greek word is used for "given God his due" in verse 29 and "vindicated" in verse 35. It is curious that the Greek has "and", not "but", both in Matthew and Luke; but this may be due to an Aramaic original. Meanwhile, some manuscripts of Matthew have "actions" (or possibly "handiwork") instead of "children". If this were right, other interpretations would lie open to us; "after all, wisdom betrays itself in a man's actions" might be part of what the Jews said of our Lord, or "the divine wisdom betrays itself in all God's creatures (including food and drink)" might be our Lord's retort to his critics. But on the whole it seems likely that "actions" is a correction of the text, due to some early scribe who thought "from her children" an unintelligible phrase. "The true representatives of wisdom acclaim God's wisdom in all its (apparently inconsistent) manifestations" is perhaps as near as we can get to the sense of a passage which remains highly disputable.

11.20-24. *Faithlessness of Galilee.* The rebuke to the Galilean cities fits in well with the passage immediately before it, or with the feeling of the chapter as a whole (cf. verses 4 and 5 above). But Luke gives it in a different setting (10.13), and perhaps we should find the tone of it more natural if it came late in the Ministry. The apostrophe to Capharnaum seems to be an echo from the denunciation of Babylon in Is. 14.15;

Babylon, also, had been compared with Sodom and Gomorrha (Is. 13.19).

11.25-30. *A passage in the Johannine manner.* In Luke, this passage comes close to the foregoing, but after, not before, the return of the seventy-two disciples from their mission (10.21); this mission is not mentioned by Matthew. The context of the utterance is, however, of no great importance. What is certain is that our Lord is here represented by the Synoptic tradition as talking the same kind of language he talks in the Fourth Gospel, Incarnate language; and those who would condemn the Fourth Gospel as late and unauthentic are thus deprived of one of their favourite weapons. Verses 28-30 are not in Luke; the suggestion that they are based on Ecclus. 51.23 is uncalled for, since the resemblances can easily be ascribed to mere coincidence. See further, notes on Luke 10.

12.1-13. *A ruling on the Sabbath.* These two incidents, both illustrating our Lord's attitude towards the sabbath, form a single paragraph in Mark and Luke, as in Matthew; but in Mark and Luke they come earlier in the story, before the mission of the Twelve. It has been plausibly suggested that our Lord's words in verses 5 and 6 (not in Mark or Luke) really belong to a different occasion. The argument that "there is one standing here who is greater than the temple" loses its force unless the disciples were working in our Lord's service, as the priests did in the Temple service—a situation which is hardly realized in verse 1. It is possible that verse 8 also belongs to another context; it seems to answer an attack on our Lord, not on his followers. For verse 10, see notes on Luke 6.1-11.

12.14-21. *Refusal to court publicity.* Once more our Lord is anxious to limit the sphere of his appeal, but this time, it would seem, so as not to give a handle to his enemies; there must be no suggestion that he was courting the popular favour. Only Matthew has noticed the fulfilment of Is. 42. "Crowns his judgement with victory", literally, "sends out his judgement to victory"; this reads differently in Isaiah, but the text of the passage is evidently disturbed. Our Lord will not really *publicize* this



message until the time when he sends out his apostles, after the Resurrection, to evangelize all nations.

12.22-32. *Can Satan cast out Satan?* All this passage finds a parallel in Luke; all except verses 22, 23, 27, 28 and 30 in Mark. But whereas Mark agrees with Matthew about its chronological setting, Luke puts the whole discourse much later, after the Transfiguration. The comment of the multitude is wrongly translated in the Authorized Version and by Challoner;<sup>1</sup> in form, at least, it is an incredulous question, expecting the answer No; "Can this, conceivably, be the son of David?" It is the dawning of a suspicion; the blind men in 9.27, if their story is accurately dated, may perhaps have used the title "Son of David" in a historical, not in a strictly Messianic sense. "Your own sons" in verse 27 probably only means "men of your own school", that is, "people like yourselves". Some of the Fathers would understand this as referring to the Apostles; but a passage of Josephus claims that there was a tradition of exorcism among the Jews, which was supposed to come down from king Solomon. "To pronounce judgement on you" hardly means more than "to give you your answer". "Has already appeared"; the verb implies that the divine moment had overtaken them before they were aware of it. Satan has already been dethroned, or he would not give up his victims so easily. Verse 30, if it is in its right context, perhaps reflects on the unsuccessfulness of contemporary Jewish exorcism.

Luke omits verse 31, and gives verse 32 in another setting. But Mark (3.30) definitely connects this mysterious utterance with the calumny about Beelzebub. Commentators have been much exercised to know how the idea of an irremissible sin (cf. I John 5.16) is consistent with the theology of grace; and St. Augustine identifies the "sin against the Holy Ghost" with final impenitence. But this seems irrelevant to the present context, and it is perhaps better defined as resisting the known truth. A Pharisee who criticized our Lord for eating with publicans and sinners might be guilty of no more than professional jealousy; one who admitted his miraculous powers, but sought far-fetched explanations to make them seem unimpressive, was clearly in bad faith. How far our Lord's words can be pressed is

<sup>1</sup> So also, curiously, in the Westminster Version.

another question; does he mean more than that the sin is of its own nature unpardonable? That grace cannot touch a mind which is resisting the known truth seems hard to reconcile with Acts 26.14.

12.33-42. *On the demand for a sign.* In Luke, the parable of the Unclean Spirit follows closely on the foregoing passage, and it is hard to believe that Matthew has not interrupted the thread of the dialogue by including two denunciations of the Pharisees, 33-37 and 38-42, which might come in equally well elsewhere. The first of these is peculiar to Matthew, though Luke has an echo of it in 6.45. The point is the same as in Matthew 7.16-20, but it is here emphasized more strongly; actions proceed from character, and a merely hypocritical morality, which is not the true expression of a man's nature, will give itself away before long. Verses 36 and 37 have no parallel elsewhere. The sense is, no doubt, that even words can have importance, because words as much as deeds can be the index of character. Our Lord does not say that we shall be judged severely for spending our time in profitless conversation. He says that even our thoughtless words—some of them—will look black on our record at the Judgement, because of the warped nature they revealed.

The demand for a sign is not in Mark; Luke puts it after the parable of the Unclean Spirit. By a "sign" we should probably understand a miracle done to command, after the pattern laid down in Ex. 4.1-9. What was the sign of Jonas? Luke omits verse 40, yet he does not regard the repentance of the Ninevites as the sign in question, since he puts it after the Queen-of-Saba passage. That verse 40 is authentic, there can be no doubt; the curious reckoning of three days and three nights in the tomb, found nowhere else, would not have been ventured on by an interpolator. It is not so certain that it stands in its right context. The utterance would be much more in place later in our Lord's ministry; the prophecy of his Passion and Resurrection in 16.21 loses much of its atmosphere if the Resurrection had been foretold, and publicly, all those weeks earlier. It seems possible that on this *occasion* our Lord simply said, "The only sign that will be given it is the sign of the prophet Jonas", and left his meaning, for the present, in doubt. See further on Luke 11.29-32.

The Resurrection is described as happening "on the third day", by Matthew and Luke; "after three days" by Mark (8.31, 9.30, 10.34) and in the speech attributed to the chief priests and Pharisees in Matthew 27.63. The meaning is the same, according to the Jewish habit of speech (cf. II Paralip. 10.5 and 12). But it appears further that a night and a day were regarded as a single unit, any fragment of which was reckoned as if it were the whole; this computation appears to be used in I Kings 30, 12 and 13. Thus "three days and three nights" in the story of Jonas may have only meant "a period of time overlapping with three day-and-night spaces", as it did in the case of our Lord's entombment.

12.43-45. *Dangers of a negative piety.* The last words of verse 45 (not in Luke) clearly indicate that we are to read this whole passage as a parable. We are not, then, encouraged to concentrate our attention on the rather anthropomorphic setting of the picture; our Lord will have been condescending, we do not know how far, to the minds of his audience. Meanwhile, what is the significance of the parable? In outline, at least, we can hardly doubt that St. Chrysostom's interpretation is right. The exorcised man stands for the Jewish people, purged by its captivity in Babylon, and by its later afflictions, of its old idolatrous habits, but given over to a rigid and exclusive nationalism which threatens to involve it in worse calamities still. In its moral application, the parable is a warning on the same lines against a merely negative and formal religiosity, which has no real powers of resistance against spiritual enemies. But it must be confessed that the outline of the picture is left somewhat vague, and it is not clear how much our Lord is alluding to the political, how much to the purely religious attitude of his contemporaries.

12.46-50. *Discipleship the true kinship.* Matthew and Mark give this saying as the postscript to the argument with the Pharisees about Beelzebul; Luke (who records it elsewhere) substitutes here another saying which seems equally, at first sight, a slight on the Holy Family. There can be little doubt that our Lord's human parentage is here treated as the symbol of his human nationality, and that the enigmatic moral is that of Romans 4.11; the true children of Abraham are those

who imitate his faithful obedience, not those (necessarily) who are sprung from his body. For the "brethren" of our Lord, see note on verse 55 in the following chapter.

13.1-23. *Parable of the Sower, and its meaning.* So far, we have come across a few sayings cast into the form of parables—the Strong Man, for example, or the Unclean Spirit, in the foregoing chapter. But it is with the parable of the Sower that our Lord's hidden teaching really begins, in all three Gospels alike; from now on, right up to the preparations for the Last Supper, a series of full-dress parables, in Matthew and Luke especially, insistently claims our attention. It is as if our Lord had resigned himself to the incredulity of his fellow-countrymen, and were determined to sketch out, in a kind of cipher language, the programme of a universal Church.

This intention of delivering a secret message is clearly laid down in verses 9-15. He tones down the quotations from Isaias, which would seem to imply that the prophet deliberately wrapped up his meaning for fear that his audience might understand, and be led to repent. But he definitely asserts that there is an inner meaning in his parables which the bulk of his hearers will fail to penetrate; it is only meant for his favoured disciples. For them, the secret of the kingdom is already beginning to come out. It is not to be a theophany, followed by the triumph of the Jews over their enemies. It is to be manifested in men's hearts, and its effects will be proportioned to their spiritual receptivity. It is not "this people" of the Jews, blind and deaf to the truth, that will benefit by the setting-up of the kingdom, but an *élite* chosen on very different principles.

Verse 12 does not necessarily belong to this context; Matthew himself gives it a different context elsewhere (25.29). The sentiment is taken from common life; the rich get presents from those who would curry favour with them; the poor are too poor to stand up for their rights. Its application is that in the spiritual life you cannot stand still, you go forward or go back. Its relevance to the present context is presumably that the Jews who rejected our Lord would be deprived even of that qualified position of spiritual advantage which they enjoyed as the children of the old covenant. The point of verse 16 is not that of Luke



10.23, and it looks as if verse 17 might have been included here through association with a saying which was really distinct.

13.24-30. *Parable of the Tares.* Only in Matthew. The identity of the bastard crop is uncertain; darnel is the name usually given to it, but it seems probable, other things being equal, that some cultivated grain would have been chosen, the seed being easier to come by. Alford, however, records the experience of a farmer in Leicestershire, who recovered damages when his field had been maliciously sown with charlock.

13.31-35. *The Mustard-seed and the Leaven.* Mark has these verses (except 35) in the corresponding position; Luke gives the Mustard Seed and the Leaven elsewhere. It appears that the mustard plant grows to an unusual height in Palestine. The Mustard Seed, like the Church, absorbs; the Leaven, like the Gospel, radiates. Yet the two parables are a pair; a fresh secret is being made known about the kingdom—that it will be a gradual growth, not a manifestation suddenly revealed on the clouds of heaven. For the courtesy with which our Lord appeals to the women, as well as the men, among his audience, cf. Luke 15.1-10.

13.36-43. *The Tares explained.* A third secret about the kingdom is revealed in our Lord's explanation of the Tares. It was assumed that the Messiah would set up an earthly kingdom of peace and justice; there would be no "scandals" (that is, no disconcerting developments, to test our faith and our patience) anywhere. Our Lord proclaims that his kingdom will not be like that; scandals will continue to abound, there will always be a bastard growth interfering with the true crop. It is possible to suppose that this refers to persecution of God's people from without; but it is more natural (especially in view of the parallel afforded by verses 47-50 below) to understand that *the kingdom itself* will include unworthy citizens, who will only be weeded out later, at the final judgement of mankind. "Then, at last" in verse 43 is emphatic; the perfect world-order will be set up, not at the beginning of the "kingdom", as our Lord uses the term, but at the end of it. It may be noted that our Lord's parables do not solve for us the problem of grace

and free will, they only state the terms of it. In the parable of the Sower, what determines the issue is the soil, not the crop; in the Parable of the Tares, it is the crop, not the soil.

13.44-52. *The Treasure, the Pearl, and the Net.* It is not easy to see why verses 47-50 come after, not before, verses 44-46. The Tares and the Net are clearly sister parables, like the Treasure and the Pearl. The net contains worthless fish just as the crop includes worthless elements, and the sorting out does not take place until the net is brought to land, just as the weeding did not take place till the harvest. Meanwhile, verses 44-46 reveal the fourth secret of the kingdom; a fact which is commonly overlooked, because a more superficial interpretation of them lends itself to pulpit purposes. The moral is, we are told, that anyone who realizes the value of the Christian inheritance will be prepared to sacrifice anything in the world for it. But it would be intolerably confusing if the divine initiative which is implied in verses 3, 24, 31, 33, and 47 were suddenly dropped out of sight in verses 44 and 45. The man who buys the field, the merchantman who buys the pearl, is evidently Almighty God, as in the other parables of this chapter. The treasure, the pearl, can only be the faith of the Gentiles, which he holds so precious (though it is still buried away from sight) that he is prepared to sacrifice for it all that he has—his ancient covenant with the Jews. Thus verses 44-46 have, like the rest of the chapter, a reference to the universality of the Messianic kingdom; like the rest of the chapter, they lead up to the decisive verse 52. The true scribe (unlike the scribes of our Lord's day) is one who is apprenticed to the craft of the new kingdom. Just as some host, rich in heirlooms, will not decorate his table altogether with things of yesterday, the true scribe will see in the new kingdom the persistence of God's ancient covenant, but in a new form.

13.53-58. *Nazareth and its Prophet.* The whole of the last two sections, from 36-52, are without parallel in the other Gospels. In the concluding verses of the chapter, Matthew returns to the Synoptic tradition; the rejection of our Lord at Nazareth is placed by Mark (6.2) just before the Mission of the Apostles; there is a doubtful parallel in

Luke (4.24), and an echo of it in John (6.42). The words "they had no confidence in him" (literally, "they were scandalized in him") in verse 56 are interesting; to be "scandalized" is ordinarily to be disconcerted by some unforeseen development in the situation (cf. 11.6). We are perhaps meant to understand that the people of Nazareth had heard of the great Prophet, but did not realize, till they saw him in person, who it was. In verse 55 Matthew (who has told us the story of the Virgin Birth) makes the Nazarenes refer to "the carpenter's son", whereas Mark substitutes "the carpenter". But in verse 58 it looks as if Mark had preserved the exact wording of a common source when he tells us that our Lord "could do no miracles there", whereas Matthew has toned down the impression. See note on Mark 6.5.

For "are not his brethren", Mark has "is he not the brother of". Luke does not refer to our Lord's brethren in this context, but they are mentioned in Matthew 12.47, with its parallels in Mark and in Luke, and also by John (7.3-10). St. Paul mentions an Apostle who is called James, "the brother of the Lord" (Gal. 1.19), and alludes elsewhere to the missionary travels of "the Lord's brethren" (I Cor. 9.5). The Hebrew word translated "brother" seems to have had, in general, the sense of "fellow-clansman", as the Latin word *frater* had originally; a good instance of this use is Jacob's "brethren" in Gen. 31.37, 46. Sometimes it was used much more widely, sometimes narrowed down so as to indicate a close relationship. It might imply a common father or mother, but, since there was no word for "cousin" or "nephew", it had to do duty for these; Abraham's nephew Lot is his "brother" (e.g. Gen. 14.14). In Tobias 7.3 the Hebrew and Chaldaean versions have "brother", where the Greek has "cousin". In I Paralip. 23.22 Eleazar has no sons, and his daughters marry their "brothers". It seems clear, then, that if our Lord had no brothers and sisters in our sense, the family council which consisted of his near relations would nevertheless have been described as his "brothers" and "sisters". Now, we know that a woman called "Mary, the mother of James and Joseph" was present at the Crucifixion (Matthew 27.56, and parallel in Mark), and John's account (19.25) proves that the woman so distinguished was not our Blessed Lady. The natural inference is that our Lord had close relations who were described as his brothers and sisters, and the tes-

timony of tradition to our Lady's perpetual virginity remains unshaken. See further, notes on John 7.3 and 19.25.

14.1-12. *Death of John the Baptist.* At this point, the three streams of Synoptic tradition suddenly converge. Like Matthew, Mark and Luke repeat king Herod's suggestion about our Lord's true identity, and each of them goes on immediately to tell the story of the Five Thousand. But what was the connection? Matthew is naturally understood to imply that Herod's comment was made almost immediately after the Baptist's death, and that our Lord withdrew to the other side of the Lake so as to be outside the dominions of the persecutor. Mark (6.30) and Luke (9.10) seem curiously unconscious of any connection at all. It is difficult to resist the impression that Matthew is authentic. From this point onwards, Matthew and Mark relate for the most part the same incidents, and in the same order; Luke shews a remarkable independence.

The account of St. John's death is much fuller in Mark; Luke has omitted it.

14.13-21. *Miracle of the Five Thousand.* Apart from the fact of our Lord's death and resurrection, no incident in his career is more generously documented than this miracle. It is described in all four Gospels, and there are cross-references to it in Matthew 16.9, Mark 6.52 and 8.19, John 6.23, 26. Nor is there any discrepancy, even in appearance, between the various narratives. Matthew's long rubric, verses 13-14, is perhaps meant to introduce a moment of major importance, like 4.23-25 above.

14.22-36. *Our Lord walks on the Lake of Galilee.* Alone among the incidents of our Lord's ministry, this is omitted by Luke and recorded by John (6.15-21). We have reached Luke's "greater omission"; his narrative fails us here, and we do not rejoin it till we reach the story of St. Peter's Confession (Matthew 16.13 and following). The setting of the miracle is not easy to recapture. Our Lord does not seem to do miracles for the sake of miracle; what occasion had he, then, to walk on the water, instead of taking ship? Why must he wait to "send the multitudes home"; what process is envisaged by the words, and why was it



important that the Apostles should cross the lake at once? John's account suggests that "send them home" really means "give them the slip"; they wanted to make "a king" of him, and would have been unwilling to let him re-embark. But, as night came on, they bivouacked contentedly enough on the further side of the Lake; he could not escape from their loyal attentions, having no longer a boat to take him home. His walking on the water defeated their calculations. The Apostles perhaps imagined that he would go home by land, round the shore of the Lake, with the crowd in attendance on him. But it must be confessed that the situation is not made wholly clear.

Verses 28-31 are peculiar to Matthew. Assuming that he and Mark depend on a common tradition, are we to suppose that Mark omitted, or that Matthew filled in the picture? The same problem recurs elsewhere in connexion with St. Peter; Mark records neither the promise made at Caesarea Philippi (Matthew 16.17) nor the incident of the tribute-money (Matthew 17.23). It would be intelligible, if Mark's gospel was written for Christians living in Rome, that St. Peter's name should not be brought into undue prominence, for the sake of his own safety. But in the present context we have also to reckon with the silence of John, who clearly wrote when such silence was no longer necessary (cf. note on Mark 14.32-53).

Verse 33 is also peculiar to Matthew; Mark describes the astonishment of the Apostles, but we can hardly doubt that "those in the boat" here is meant to include others. The formula "Thou art indeed the Son of God" is at first sight disconcerting; we are accustomed to think of St. Peter's confession in 16.16 below as the first declaration of its kind. But we should no doubt distinguish between the faint surmise evoked by a sudden moment of astonishment, and an abiding conviction such as that granted to St. Peter (cf. John 1.49).

If it is true (cf. note on 1-12 above) that our Lord crossed the Lake in order to withdraw from Herod's principality, his speedy return suggests that he had only withdrawn for the moment, by way of escaping from some unwelcome, but not necessarily hostile, deputation, which he knew to be on the way.

15.1-20. *On external religion.* Not in Luke. Mark gives equivalents,

"Corban, that is, a gift" and "common, that is, unwashed hands", as if he were *interpreting* an Aramaic original, whereas Matthew has simply "gift" and "unwashed", as if his Greek was a *translation* from the Aramaic. The grammar of verse 5, and of the parallel verse in Mark, is obscure, but the point is clear; a man was not bound to support his parents in their old age if he could claim that all his available money was vowed to the service of the Temple; and it is to be presumed that this was sometimes a fraudulent transaction, only a part of the sum in question actually finding its way into the treasury. For the use of "to honour" in the sense of giving financial support, cf. Eccclus. 38.1, I Tim. 5.3. The Vulgate seems to have misunderstood the exact sense of verse 5 here, but not in the corresponding passage of Mark (7.11), "All the money out of which you might get help from me is now Corban".

The point of our Lord's "parable" is the same as in 5.20-24, namely that we shall be judged not simply by our actions, considered as external actions, but by the interior dispositions which gave rise to them. Here, however, the contrast is heightened, the external actions being such as have, at best, only a ceremonial significance. Washing and eating are processes which begin and end in the physical order; outward defilement is not to be classed with murder, adultery, etc., which arise from a wrong moral intention.

15.21-28. *The Syrophenician woman.* Only Matthew and Mark record this single instance in which our Lord visited purely Gentile territory, and did a miracle for one who was a Gentile both by race and culture. Mark, who usually tells his story at full length, is briefer than Matthew here; we should have naturally understood him as meaning that the interview took place in a house, whereas Matthew's vivid account represents the woman as following the travellers along their road, so importunate that the Apostles ask for a miracle, to get rid of her. "Who came from that country" presumably refers to her origins; it can hardly mean that she "had just come out of that country", since our Lord, when he met her, was already in it. Nothing is said, by either Evangelist, about the reasons for our Lord's journey; the word "withdrew" in verse 21 is the same as that used in 14.13 above.

"Son of David" in verse 22 is surely authentic; from the dramatic

point of view, it seems inappropriate on the lips of a Gentile. This Messianic or semi-Messianic title seems to have been part of the style by which our Lord was known to his *miraculées* (cf. 9.27, 12.23, 20.30), and the woman uses it, perhaps without much consciousness of its significance. Verse 24 recalls 10.6; the implication seems to be that our Lord's message was not to reach the Gentiles until his own fellow-countrymen had had the opportunity of welcoming it. Mark, if he had the full story, may have omitted the saying, as confusing to Gentile minds. To the woman, our Lord gives a provocative answer, by way of testing her faith (cf. John 2.4, 11.23). Her "Ah yes!" is a renewed appeal, not an admission of the principle he has laid down.

15.29-39. *Miracle of the Four Thousand.* The first three verses are peculiar to Matthew, 32-39 are repeated almost verbally in Mark. It is clear from the beginning of chapter 16 that the earliest Christian tradition distinguished this miracle from that of the Five Thousand. There is, further, a difference of setting; it seems that the Five Thousand could, if they wished, have bought food in the neighbourhood (14.15); here, they are in a desert place where they have no chance, humanly speaking, of satisfying their hunger. The twelve wallets (one for each Apostle) mentioned in 14.20 were much smaller than the hampers (Acts 9.25) mentioned here, and the distinction is carefully observed below (16.9 and 10).

16.1-12. *On trust in Providence.* This passage is full of difficulties. Is it in fact a continuous passage? Verses 2 and 3 do not appear in Mark; Luke has it among a set of promiscuous sayings at the end of his 12th chapter. Verse 4 has already appeared in Matthew (12.39) with a parallel in Luke (11.29). There is no link in thought between verses 1-4 and verses 5-12 except the curious coupling of the Sadducees with the Pharisees (verses 1 and 11) but in Mark the Sadducees have disappeared altogether. Mark, however, seems definitely to connect the voyage with the interview (8.13), which justifies us in treating the whole episode as continuous history.

But did it, as a matter of history, follow immediately after the miracle of the Four Thousand? Nothing, apart from mere juxtaposition,

would incline us to think so. We do not expect the disciples to be asked whether they *remember* a miracle of such importance if it has happened the day before. Perhaps it was an undated piece of tradition which both Evangelists included here, simply because of the cross-reference.

Verses 2 and 3 are omitted by a considerable body of manuscripts, but there can be no doubt they are authentic; if they had been supplied from Luke 12.54 they would have been supplied in Luke's own words, which differ considerably. It is not clear why Matthew inserts verse 4 in his narrative a second time (cf. 12.39 above); but it is quite possible that our Lord did repeat the saying, with the implication "as I told you before".

For the understanding of what follows, it is important to notice that our Lord's reference to "leaven" has nothing to do with the moral of it. That reference merely served to remind the Apostles of the fact that they had come away short of supplies. To render verse 7 "They argued among themselves, It is because we have no bread" gives a possible translation of the Greek, but does not satisfy the sense. Why, on any shewing, would the fact of their improvidence suggest a warning *against* bread, literal or metaphorical? No, a casual allusion to bread reminded them that, in the suddenness of their departure, they had come away with empty wallets. Their anxiety over this prompted our Lord to read them a lesson on trust in Providence. It must be confessed that verses 11 and 12 are much less effective as a conclusion than Mark's "How is it that you still do not understand?" They have almost the air of an early foot-note by a commentator which has crept into Matthew's text.

Which did our Lord actually say; "the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees" or "the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod"? The latter formula, being less obvious, is more likely to have been smoothed down into the former. Did the translator of Matthew come across a word which was difficult to read, and put in "Sadducees" as a guess? Or did he write "Sadducees" by inadvertence, with the first verse of the chapter still running in his mind?

For further comment on this passage, see notes on Mark 8.

16.13-23. *The Confession of St. Peter; the Passion foretold.* Luke



rejoins the other two Synoptic Gospels at this point, and all three cover the same ground up to the end of Matthew 17. The formula of St. Peter's confession varies in all three; Luke has "the Christ of (that is, anointed by) God", Mark has simply "the Christ". But it would be unsafe to draw conclusions—e.g., that Mark's formula is the most primitive because it is the simplest. In 14.61 Mark has preserved the formula, "the Christ, the son of the blessed God"; quite possibly, then, Matthew's version here is historically accurate, and Mark has shortened it for the sake of an undoubted rhetorical effect.

It is more obviously significant, that verses 17-19 are peculiar to Matthew. If we apply standards of literary, not merely historical criticism, it is difficult to resist the impression that Matthew gives us the primitive account. The close parallelism of "Thou art the Christ . . . Thou art Peter", the sudden change of situation by which the Rock becomes a Stone of Stumbling, are literary effects which are not likely to have been obtained by the foisting in of an extra three verses. On the other side, the account given by Mark and Luke is so bitten-off, so inconclusive, that it inevitably suggests an omission. Some have attributed this omission to modesty on the part of the Apostle himself, who was traditionally associated with the composition of the Second Gospel. But this would imply that Luke, who preserves a similar silence, had no access at this point either to Matthew or to the tradition on which Matthew depended. It is perhaps best to hold that both Mark and Luke, being written for Christians in Rome, omitted this reference to St. Peter's privileged position as likely to endanger his life in the event of persecution. (Cf. notes on 14.28 above, and 17.23 below.) New religions were suspect in Rome, and some think, from a reference in Suetonius, that the Christians had already attracted notice as early as A.D. 50. In any case, the passage may have stood in Mark and Luke as they were originally written, and been cut out later from motives of prudence.

"I tell thee this in thy turn" in verse 18 is a phrase which underlines the parallel; cf. notes on Luke 1.56-80. The word used by our Lord for "Peter" and for "rock" was evidently the same, namely Cephias (cf. John 1.42); in the Greek, "rock" has the feminine form, since this was

the common usage. The "gates" of hell may be taken literally, if we suppose an allusion to Numbers 16.32; "my congregation, founded on a rock, will not be swallowed up by the earth, like the congregation of Core, Dathan and Abiron". But more probably, after the Hebrew usage, the gates stand for the city. Our Lord himself was alluded to by the early Church under the symbol of a Rock (I Cor. 10.4); and also under that of a Key-bearer (Apoc. 1.18), in allusion to Is. 22.22.

We must not expect to know the precise motives which our Lord had in enjoining secrecy on his Apostles. But evidently during this last period of his ministry he was accustoming them to the idea of Messiahship which is to be found in Is. 53. The address, "satan", was perhaps less abrupt in Aramaic than it sounds in English; most commonly in the Old Testament it is not a proper name, but a common noun denoting "an adversary" of any kind. But evidently our Lord would set us an example of repulsing our friends unceremoniously if they try to interfere with God's will for us. Mark's omission of the words "thou art a stone in my path" is perhaps a corollary to the omission of verses 17-19.

16.24-28. *A call to renunciation.* These verses occur at the same point in all three Synoptic Gospels, almost without verbal difference. In part, they are a repetition of Matthew 10.38, 39, Luke 17.33. Matthew's rubric suggests that the words were spoken on this occasion, while our Lord was actually at Caesarea Philippi, or in its immediate neighbourhood, well outside Galilean territory; nor is there any indication that they had been followed by faithful crowds from Galilee. It is therefore disconcerting to read in Mark (8.34) "he called his disciples to him, and the multitude with them". Conceivably we are meant to understand, both in Matthew and in Mark, that our Lord returned (without further incident) from Caesarea to Galilee, and there issued his call for renunciation (as Mark tells us) to a general audience. If not, we must be content to suppose that Mark is here deliberately correcting the impression made by Matthew, though only in a matter of detail. It was not in the neighbourhood of Caesarea, but on the way there (Mark 8.27), that St. Peter's Confession was made; they were still in Galilee, and it

was still possible to collect a crowd if there was any important announcement to be made. Afterwards, our Lord went on with his immediate followers in a northerly direction, and a week later was able to take three of them up to a high mountain—probably mount Hermon. Whichever be the true account of an apparent discrepancy, it seems as if Luke recognized the discrepancy; his rubric (in 9.23) is simply “It was a saying of his, to all men alike”.

Verse 28 is a curious enigma. The formula used in Luke is one which would give us no surprise, “before they have seen the kingdom of God” (Luke 9.27); that need not imply anything more than the diffusion of Christ’s Church. Mark does something to harden the lines of the picture: “before they have seen the kingdom of God present in all its power” (8.39). But “power” (he says nothing about “glory”) is the word commonly used for the miracles which attended the preaching of the gospel; we should naturally understand both Mark and Luke as using “kingdom” in the sense of “church”. It is Matthew who makes the saying difficult; how can “the Son of Man coming in his kingdom” refer to anything but the Second Advent, especially in view of verse 27? This is an acute embarrassment to the critics who would assign Matthew to a late date. If he wrote, for example, after the Fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, how is it that he, alone among the Evangelists, does nothing to soften down the effect of an apparently unfulfilled prophecy?

The whole turn of the sentence seems to indicate a definite event, rather than a gradual process like the diffusion of the gospel. And if we use the kind of arguments which are ordinarily used by New Testament critics, we shall be forced to conclude that Matthew’s version is here the primitive one. In any case, we have to allow for the possibility that he has given us a textual quotation. What meaning, then, should we attach to our Lord’s utterance? Probably, he had the destruction of Jerusalem in mind; but perhaps as part of a Divine scheme which remained in-operative, owing to the non-fulfilment of human conditions (see notes on Matthew 24.30-31).

17.1-8. *The Transfiguration*. The three Synoptists still agree about the order of events, and all emphasize the importance of St. Peter’s con-

fession by reckoning the time which elapsed between it and the scene on the mountain. Luke tells the story most fully; and with curious intimacy. The best manuscripts give, in verse 4, "I will make" (or, "let me make") instead of "let us make". St. Peter's words are sometimes interpreted as meaning it was a fortunate circumstance that the Apostles should be there, so that they could make themselves useful. But the reference is probably more general, and in any case they were the dazed words of a man in a trance; Mark and Luke apologize for him accordingly. The suggestion was evidently that they should make rough booths out of brushwood to ward off the sun; the idea would occur to Peter more naturally if the "Feast of Booths" was being celebrated about this time, but the supposition is not necessary. See further, notes on Luke 9.28-36.

17.9-13. *Conversation on the mountain-side.* Omitted by Luke. Here, and again in verse 22, Mark reports that the Apostles could not understand what was meant by the resurrection from the dead. How, we ask, could the idea of resurrection come to the Apostles as a complete surprise, when our Lord had carefully predicted it less than a week before (16.21), and without producing any such effect of bewilderment? What complicates the situation still further, is that Luke is even more emphatic about the attitude of the Apostles on a later occasion (Luke 18.34), although nothing is said about it in the parallel passages of Matthew and Mark. Possibly both Mark and Luke thought it necessary to prepare the reader's mind for the undoubted fact that when the resurrection happened the Apostles were not prepared for it, and enlarged the tradition, each in his own way, with foot-notes.

In verse 10, the text of Matthew runs literally, "Why is it, *then*, that the scribes say Elias must come before Christ?" The logic of the word "*then*", which disappears in Mark, must be something of this sort: "How are we to reconcile this picture of a suffering Messiah, rejected by his own people, with the prophecy of Malachy (4.5) that the Jews will be spiritually prepared for Christ's coming, through the ministry of Elias?" This explains the form of our Lord's reply: "Malachy was right about the mission of Elias, and about its purpose; but he did not say it



would succeed. Actually, the Jews have rejected Elias, in the person of John, and are about to reject me, the Christ, in the same way". See further, notes on Mark 9.2-12.

17.14-23. *Healing of the lunatic boy, and fresh prophecy of the Passion.* This incident follows the Transfiguration in all three Gospels; but the verbal resemblance, especially between Matthew and Luke, is comparatively slight. Mark has the fullest account. The complaint uttered by our Lord in verse 16 is common to all three Gospels. Its bearing seems to be quite general, and it reflects the thoughts which were in our Lord's mind at the time, rather than the actual situation. Perhaps he sees in the father, powerless to exercise control over his son, a type of that generation in which Elias was to have reconciled the hearts of the fathers with the hearts of the children (Malachy 4.6). It is doubtful whether verse 19 really belongs to this context; it is given elsewhere by Luke (17.6). For comment on verse 20, see notes on Mark 9.14-32. "While they were still together" in verse 21 should properly mean "while they were mustering"; this might be a reference to the return of the seventy-two disciples from their mission, mentioned only by Luke (10.1). But the word used is a translator's word, and perhaps the significance of it is less definite. "Overcome with sorrow" in verse 22 is conceivably a translator's equivalent for some word meaning "troubled", i.e. "puzzled"; cf. Mark 9.31.

17.23-26. *The paying of the Temple tribute.* Not in Mark or Luke. It is curious that Mark should have omitted this incident, if he found it in his sources; not because the miracle (or rather, special providence) is of great significance in itself, but because it is one of those passages in which our Lord's divine origin is taken for granted. But if there is some ground (see notes on 18.1-10) for regarding this section as continuous with the section which follows, it may have been suppressed on the ground that it brought St. Peter's name into such prominence. In this case, modesty on the part of the Apostle himself would be a more probable explanation than motives of prudence (cf. notes on 16.13-23). Alternatively, the incident may have been omitted as uninteresting to Gentile readers.

18.1-14. *God's care for the insignificant.* This passage seems to be a collection of sayings, roughly put together, which may or may not have been uttered on the same occasion. But the incident of the little child occurs at this point in all three Synoptic Gospels. In verse 1, as in 17.10, a literal translation of Matthew's text gives "Who, then, is greatest?" If we could be certain that this turn of phrase was in the original, and not a mere flourish of the translator's, it would suggest that the rivalry among the Apostles was provoked by the close association of St. Peter's name with our Lord's in the matter of the Temple tribute. Verse 4 is curiously omitted in the other Gospels, though it appears to be the operative part of the argument. For verses 8 and 9, see note on Matthew 5.29 and 30. Verse 10 is peculiar to Matthew; it states more clearly than any other passage in Scripture the doctrine of Guardian Angels. "Little ones" evidently means children in verses 3 and 4; in verse 6 (even on the doubtful supposition that it belongs to the same context) the term is best understood as applying to insignificant persons generally, as in 25.40; in verse 10 the question remains open. Verse 11 is missing in some manuscripts.

Verses 12-14 are difficult to account for. The parable of the Lost Sheep fits in perfectly here; it fits in perfectly (with the Lost Coin and the Prodigal Son) in Luke 15. But the point emphasized (and nearly always our Lord's parables have a single point of emphasis) is quite different. In Matthew the shepherd loves all alike, even the weakling which has got left behind. In Luke he loves, with a special tenderness, the sinner who has strayed. Has Matthew worked in a parable which (as verse 13 might seem to indicate) was meant to emphasize a slightly different point? Or did our Lord use the same parable on two separate occasions, each time with a slightly different moral? The latter seems more probable. The reference here is to children, not to insignificant persons in general (the word "one" in verse 14 being neuter, not masculine as in verse 6). In verse 14 the strange phrase, "there is no will in the presence of your heavenly Father", evidently implies an Aramaic original.

18.15-20. *Discipleship calls us to a corporate life.* The first sentence here is found in Luke (17.3); the rest is peculiar to Matthew. For "does

thee wrong" in verse 15 some manuscripts have simply "does wrong", and some of the Fathers have understood the whole passage as referring to the duty of fraternal correction; but the omission was probably a mere accident. Some would understand the *ecclesia* mentioned in verse 17 not as the Christian Church, but as the Jewish "congregation", or the local synagogue. But Matthew would hardly have put this saying next to verse 18, with its clearly Christian reference, if he had suspected anything of the kind.

18.21-35. *The duty of forgiveness.* Verse 21 finds a parallel, but much less forcibly put, in Luke 17.4; the parable of the Two Debtors is in Matthew only. The resemblance of verse 22 to Gen. 4.24 is no doubt intentional. The rubric "Here is an image of the kingdom of heaven" ordinarily means, as in chapter 13, an allegory of the Church, and perhaps especially of its relations with the Synagogue. It would be possible here to trace such an allegory, with the first debtor as the Jewish people and the second debtor as the Gentiles. But the parallel does not quite run on all fours; and in any case it is clear from verse 35 that the story, in its present context, has a plain moral significance. Perhaps, then, in this instance, "the kingdom of heaven" means the final coming of our Lord in judgement. Verse 30 looks as if it might be quoted as proving the doctrine of Purgatory, like 5.26 above. But the words "until he should have paid all the debt" do not *necessarily* mean (in Hebrew idiom) that the debt ever would be paid; see note on 1.25 above.

19.1-12. *On marriage and divorce.* The chief difficulty of this passage is verse 9. The manuscripts here shew great signs of confusion; but the true text is probably that of the Vulgate, though the words "and he too commits adultery, who marries her after she has been put away" may possibly have been inserted, to match 5.32 above. Mark describes the incident very much in the same words (10.1-12); Luke 16.18 probably represents, not this passage, but Matthew 5.32. Here, as in Matthew 5.32, our Lord is commonly understood to make an exception in favour of the husband whose wife has been unfaithful to him. How is it possible to reconcile this (i) with the fact that the corresponding passages in Mark and Luke omit the qualifying words? (ii) With the fact that St.

Paul (I Cor. 7.10) makes no exception of the kind? (iii) With the fact that, on Matthew's own shewing (verse 10 of this section), the Apostles regarded our Lord's interpretation of the Law as almost intolerably strict?

It was pointed out in the notes on Matthew 5.32 that the words our Lord uses there are patient of a quite different interpretation; he may have meant, not "except on the ground of unfaithfulness", but "quite apart from the question of his unfaithfulness as a husband". In the present passage the Greek can hardly be made to bear that meaning. But if Matthew wrote in Aramaic, the possibility remains that his translator has given us a correct, though ambiguous, rendering in 5.32, and an inaccurate rendering here.

Several ingenious attempts have been made to solve the difficulty; it has been suggested, for example, that the word used for "unfaithfulness" may have been a technical term for marriage within the forbidden degrees (see notes on Acts 15.29). But even if we take the utterance at its face value, it may be doubted whether our Lord had the case of the betrayed husband expressly in mind. It should be observed (i) that according to the true reading of the manuscripts our Lord does not say "if it is not on account of unfaithfulness" but merely "when it is not on account of unfaithfulness"; (ii) that the Hebrew mind had a trick of using "and" to express a close causal relation between the verb which goes before and the verb which follows. Our Lord's meaning, then, may be roughly paraphrased thus: "If a man turns his perfectly innocent wife out of doors in order to marry another, he is an adulterer, whatever he says". He is simply describing, in frank terms, a common human situation—the ill treatment of a wife by a husband who has grown tired of her; he is not explicitly thinking of the case in which *both* partners are tired of one another, and the wife's conduct gives the husband a welcome excuse for getting rid of her. There was no need, in strict Jewish law, to legislate for such a contingency, because the woman ought properly to be stoned to death (Lev. 20.10; John 8.5). He only mentions the wife's innocence incidentally, as increasing the *gravamen* of the husband's cruelty.

There can be little doubt that Matthew, in this passage, has preserved an authentic tradition. Mark, perhaps because he foresaw that our



Lord's language was liable to be misunderstood, cut out the mention of the wife's faithfulness, which after all was not essential to the picture—you could leave it to be assumed. Whether our Lord spoke against divorce on two separate occasions, and if so whether he repeated the same formula, or used one slightly different, can only be a matter of conjecture. See further, notes on Mark 10.1-12.

"To suit your hard hearts" in verse 8 is generally interpreted as meaning that Moses allowed the Jews to put away their wives, for fear they might otherwise be tempted to kill them; and no doubt this was the purpose of the legislator. But hardness of heart, in the language of Scripture, is commonly used of rebelliousness, especially of the Jewish people against their God. Conceivably, then, our Lord means that God permitted the Jews to repudiate their wives for unfaithfulness, in token that he had a right to repudiate his people if they were unfaithful to him. The comment of the Apostles in verse 10 is curiously cynical, but the trials of the married state have always been a favourite subject of rustic humour. The effect would be almost overstrained, if our Lord was understood as having sanctioned divorce on the ground of infidelity. The end of verse 12 is clearly a metaphorical allusion to voluntary celibacy; the fear that it might be taken literally (as it was by Origen) may be the reason for the omission of verses 10-12 in Mark.

19.13-30. *On admission to the kingdom of heaven; the rich young man; the heavenly reward.* Accidentally or by design, the blessing of the children appears as the prelude to the story of the rich young man in all three Synoptic Gospels (Mark 10.13-31, Luke 18.15-30). The echo of verse 14 in verse 23 is perhaps the reason for it; or the order may be merely historical. The children, to judge by the word Luke uses, were children in arms. Matthew's account reads literally, "children were brought to him . . . and his disciples rebuked them". Evidently it was not the children he rebuked; Mark and Luke have given a neater twist to the sentence.

In verse 17, a Greek translator seems to have been at fault. He probably imagined that the Aramaic original meant, *Why do you use the word "good" to me?* The right interpretation was evidently that implied by Mark and Luke, *Why do you use the word "good" about me?* Thus,

in Matthew, the Messianic irony of the sentiment is lost. In verse 19 the words "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" come from Lev. 19.18; they are omitted in Mark and Luke, presumably as not coming from the Decalogue. In verse 24, there is no need for such ingenious conjectures as that the "camel" meant a kind of rope, or that the "Needle's Eye" was the name given to some gate-way. Our Lord deliberately exaggerates his effects; cf. Matthew 7.3. The sense of verse 26 is not that God can make some private arrangement by which people can be saved, though rich; it means God's grace can so enable a man that he is equal to any sacrifice which may be required of him.

Verse 28 may have been inserted here out of its true context; cf. Luke 22.30. But it leads up naturally, it must be confessed, to 20.21. In verse 29, there is no suggestion, as in Mark, that the renounced possessions will be restored to a man even in this life, but together with persecution. If this were part of the primitive tradition, it is hard to see any reason why Matthew should have omitted it. More probably Mark supplied it from somebody's (perhaps from St. Peter's) private memories of the occasion. Verse 30 seems to follow on verse 28 more naturally than on verse 29; one thinks of Judas, and of St. Paul.

20.1-16. *The Labourers in the Vineyard*. This parable, only found in Matthew, may have been pronounced by our Lord immediately after what was said at the end of the foregoing chapter; or it may have been taken from some other context, and placed here because it contained the same formula of words which occurs at the end of the foregoing chapter. A Messianic solution imposes itself; the labourers called early in the day are the Jews, the children of the Old Covenant, who will receive no preference in the Messianic kingdom over the Gentiles, who have been called at the last moment. Any key to the parable which leaves this obvious and traditional interpretation out of sight, treating it as a mere moral apologue, becomes intolerably flat and almost meaningless. Much unnecessary difficulty has been caused by the assumption that the payment of wages represents the Last Judgement. How (it is asked) can we imagine souls that are just attaining the blessedness of heaven as disputing over questions of precedence? And how can the idea of an equal reward be reconciled with the promise just made to the Twelve

in 19.28? But there is no reason why the payment of wages should refer to the Last Judgement. It is merely part of the story; the point is that the call to the Christian faith is issued to Jew and Gentile alike. So, too, the third, sixth and ninth hours are merely part of the story; the point is that in the kingdom of heaven (contrary to Jewish expectations) it will not necessarily be the Jews who will be "first", or the Gentiles who will be "last".

The simplest account of the setting is that the parable is a pendant to 19.28. The picture of the Twelve sitting on thrones to judge Israel would naturally suggest the favourite Jewish notion of a Messianic kingdom in which Israel would be exalted at the expense of the rest of mankind. To correct that impression, our Lord explains that in the true Messianic kingdom, his Church, no such principle of Founder's kin would hold good. Because Mark and Luke had not included any reference to the throned Apostles in the foregoing section, the parable of the Labourers did not find a place in their story.

In verse 15, "Must thou give me sour looks?" is literally "Is thy eye evil?"—often, and perhaps here, a proverbial way of describing the niggard. In verse 16, some manuscripts omit "Many are called, but few are chosen", and some think it has been interpolated here from 22.14, where its relevance is more obvious. If it is genuine, the meaning of it lies under the surface: "What folly for Christians to dispute about the conditions of their calling, when the important thing is, not to be among the called, but to be among the chosen!" It must be confessed, however, that the parable seems better rounded off without it.

20.17-28. *The Passion again; request of the sons of Zebedee.* Matthew and Mark are here closely allied; Luke (18.31-34) omits all reference to the sons of Zebedee. In verse 19, Matthew and Luke agree in giving "on the third day", where Mark has the less exact phrase "after three days". Probably Mark preserves the authentic version; the translator of Matthew has rendered it freely, and Luke, independently, has corrected it to suit the intelligence of his Greek readers. For the Hebrew method of computation, see notes on Matthew 12.40. The request made by James and John is more intelligible in Matthew's narrative, following as it does on 19.28. The circumstance that their mother, Salome, joined

in it, is obviously authentic; it carries the stamp of conviction. If Mark knew about it, he may nevertheless have suppressed the mention of her, either on personal grounds or because it was irrelevant to the story. We seem to catch a trace of Apostolic *argot* in the phrase "sons of Zebedee"; it comes so readily to the author's pen that he forgets it would have been shorter to call their mother "Zebedee's wife". It is probable that the two brothers were thinking in terms of an earthly triumph and a Messianic kingdom on earth, but our Lord does not think it necessary to correct them about this; it is their attitude of mind which needs correction. In verse 28 (textually the same in Mark) it is not certain what Aramaic words underlie the Greek, but the language of substitution is evidently used; our Lord's "instead of" is even stronger than St. Paul's "on behalf of" (Tit. 2.14). The word "many" is no doubt an echo of Is. 53.11 and 12; its use does not cast any doubt on the traditional doctrine that our Lord died for all men. The point is simply that a single life is given up in exchange for a multitude of lives; cf. Rom. 5.15, where "many" is obviously used with the implication of "all".

20.29-34. *The two blind men.* Mark evidently has fuller information here; he gives the name of Bartimaeus as that of a blind man whom our Lord healed on this occasion, and records a touching utterance of his friends (Mark 10.49). Yet the close resemblances of language both in Mark and Luke strongly suggest that we are dealing with the same story. If Matthew represents the primitive tradition, how is it that Mark and Luke know of only one blind man, not two? A further difficulty arises, when Luke represents the blind man as being encountered on the way into Jericho, not on the way out of it (18.35); how are we to account for the discrepancy, on the supposition that Luke had either Matthew or Mark before him when he wrote?

Probably Mark, here as in several other passages, had private sources of information; and these, being based on the actual depositions made by Bartimaeus, only mentioned a single cure. He therefore left the common tradition, and was followed by Luke. But Luke seems to have had private information of his own (cf. the story of Zacchaeus), and his authorities described our Lord as healing Bartimaeus on the way into



New Jericho, recently built by Herod the Great; whereas the "Jericho" of Matthew and Mark may have been the old historical site, still inhabited, a mile or two distant. (Cf. notes on Matthew 8.28-34.)

21.1-11. *Our Lord rides into Jerusalem.* Here we have the evidence of all four gospels. For a difficulty about the dating of the incident, see notes on John 12. From Mark's account, we could not be certain that others took part in the demonstration besides the Apostles. But Mark has mentioned a crowd in 10.46, and his reference in 11.11 to "the Twelve" suggests that others besides them have been present. It seems probable that, although our Lord had started out from Galilee with no more than his usual following, they fell in with parties of pilgrims who accompanied them; John adds that a crowd came out from Jerusalem to meet them. Matthew gives Bethphage as the scene, Mark (if we adopt the most probable reading) Bethany; Luke seems to have conflated the two accounts, mentioning both villages. It looks as if Matthew had kept the authentic tradition, and Mark had substituted the better-known name of Bethany, which was close to.

The dam only figures in Matthew's version. Mark and Luke both tell us that the colt had never been ridden before; likely enough, then, that the dam should have been brought, because otherwise the colt would not follow. But the dam was irrelevant, and therefore goes without mention except in Matthew's account. The Apostles then proceeded (verse 7) to lay some of their garments on it, the colt, by way of a saddle, and invited our Lord to mount on them, the garments. Almost certainly this was the original reading, but it has given rise to a curious set of variants. The separate mention of an ass and a colt by Zachary (verse 5) had given rise to the notion that our Lord had mounted—successively, we must suppose—on two different animals, though of course Zachary's Hebrew meant nothing of the sort. Accordingly "it" was altered, by the change of a single letter, to "them", and "them" was understood in either case as referring to the two beasts: "they saddled them with their garments, and made Jesus mount on them". Other copyists, preserving "it" in the first half of the sentence, changed "them" to "it", so that the two pronouns should correspond; "they saddled it with their garments, and made Jesus mount on it". St.

Jerome is chiefly responsible for the idea that our Lord rode both on the colt and on the dam. In his translation of Zachary (9.9) he deliberately turned the he-ass of the original into a she-ass, to correspond with the supposed fulfilment of the prophecy; and here in Matthew he makes the ass of verse 5 a she-ass, though the Greek translator of Matthew obviously meant it to be masculine.

In verse 4, it will be noted, the same rubric is used as in 1.22; here, as there, it is impossible to say whether the Old Testament quotation is meant to be included in inverted commas as part of the foregoing speech, or put between parentheses as a note by the Evangelist. The same difficulty occurs in 26.56. The word "Hosanna" seems to be treated, not as a prayer for deliverance, as in Ps. 117.25, but merely as a triumphant interjection, both here and in Mark; much as we say "Thank you" without reflecting that we are leaving out a pronoun. Verse 11, with the end of verse 10, is peculiar to Matthew; it is clearly authentic. The admission that our Lord was still so little known at Jerusalem, on the very eve of his Passion, is one which the piety of a later age would have been more likely to omit than to insert.

21.12-22. *The Temple cleansed, and the fig-tree withered.* For John's account of the Temple cleansing, see notes on John 2.13-25. Luke records the incident very briefly, and says nothing about the fig-tree. Matthew and Mark appear to tell quite different stories. In Matthew, the Temple is cleansed on Palm Sunday, the fig-tree is cursed on Monday morning, and withers all in a moment. In Mark, the fig-tree is cursed on Monday, but is not found withered till Tuesday morning, and the cleansing of the Temple has happened in between, i.e. on Monday. Which Evangelist preserves the historical order, and how did the other come to re-group the series of events?

It is perhaps simplest to suppose that Matthew is not, at this point, giving us his own reminiscences; he may have been absent, or his memory may have failed him in matters of detail. He is using a source; and this source gave him a series of episodes from our Lord's life, not dated, arranged in any order or none. He included three of these episodes, 12-13, 14-17, 18-22, taking them as they came. "And Jesus went into the temple . . ." in verse 12, "And there were blind and lame . . ."

in verse 14, "As he was returning to the city . . ." in verse 18, were not meant to be chronological links with what went before. Mark depended on a private source, more sure of its details; and he deliberately corrected Matthew's order, pointing out that the Temple was not cleansed on the actual day of the triumphal entry, nor did the fig-tree wither under the eyes of the Apostles—it was a whole day before they noticed what had happened.

Verses 14-17 are peculiar to Matthew; the (obviously authentic) picture of the street-boys catching up the huzza's of the mob is not to be explained as a mere variation of Luke 19.40. When our Lord goes up to the fig-tree and "finds" nothing, we can hardly suppose that it was more than a symbolic gesture; as Mark is at pains to remind us, it was not yet the season for figs—they do not ripen till June. Evidently the whole story is that of an acted parable; otherwise we should have to accuse our Lord of childish vindictiveness. Nor can there be much doubt that the leafy but fruitless tree represents the fair-seeming but lifeless worship of Herod's Temple; perhaps Luke omitted the story because he had recorded a parable which used the same metaphor (13.6-9). Our Lord, then, goes up to the tree as the symbol of the Jewish people; will he find there the acceptable fruit of repentance? (Mark's "if, after all" seems to emphasize the point.) The lesson was read by the Apostles, but not immediately; it is a characteristic piece of real life that at the moment they paid attention to nothing but the miracle; how could the tree wither so soon?

It is tempting to suppose that the answer our Lord actually made was that preserved by Luke (17.5) without its context: "If you had faith, though it were as a grain of mustard seed, you might say to this sycamine tree, Uproot thyself and plant thyself in the sea, and it would obey you". There is some evidence that the sycamine, or mulberry, was apt to be confused with the sycomore, or wild fig. The word "mountain" might have been introduced by some copyist to make the saying harmonize with Matthew 17.19, where "mountain" suits the context well. But it must be confessed that verse 21 of this passage runs naturally enough, if we suppose the mountain to be the Mount of Olives.

21.23-27. *A question answered by a question.* Mark and Luke tell the

same story here, almost without verbal variations. "These things" refers presumably to the cleansing of the Temple; Mark's order of events would lead up to the question most naturally. It is well to observe that our Lord does not offer a merely debating reply; he is not merely leading his opponents into an irrelevant *impasse*. "Why did you not believe him?" in verse 26 implies that if the rulers of the Jews had believed St. John, they would have been forced to recognize the Divine character of our Lord's mission, instead of asking questions about it.

21.28-32. *Parable of the Two Sons*. This parable is peculiar to Matthew; it must be confessed that it fits in singularly well in its present context. The reference in verse 32 to "believing in John" follows naturally on verse 26 above; on the other side, the Two Sons and the Wicked Husbandmen are plainly sister parables, both in their subject-matter and in the lesson they convey. It is quite possible that Mark and Luke had this parable before them, but rejected it; either because they wanted to select the more telling denunciation of the two, or because verse 31, in the minds of Gentile readers, might be an encouragement to antinomianism. That the two sons represent the Gentile and the Jewish world respectively, can hardly be doubted; that is perhaps why some manuscripts reverse the order of events in the story, making the *first* son withdraw his consent, the *second* withdraw his refusal—after all, the Jews were called first. The description of St. John in verse 32 as "following all due observance" (literally, "in the way of right-doing") emphasizes the point of the parable. John, as a strict Jew, might have been expected to win converts among the Pharisees; but it was, paradoxically, the outcasts who welcomed the news of the kingdom, even when John preached it.

21.33-46. *The Wicked Husbandmen*. Also in Mark and Luke, with no considerable variations. Matthew represents the rich man as sending his servants in two batches; in Mark and Luke there are three of them, and each goes on his errand singly, perhaps by way of emphasizing the fact that the prophets of the Old Testament (and maybe John) are alluded to. In verse 39, as in Luke, the vine-dressers thrust the king's son out of the vineyard before killing him; perhaps a refinement on the



parable, with reference to the fact that our Lord was delivered up to the Gentiles, and suffered outside the gates of Jerusalem (Heb. 13.12). In Mark, they kill him and then throw his body outside the vineyard, and this was perhaps the primitive tradition; the translator of Matthew would have no difficulty in improving on it, if it stood in the Aramaic text. But it is possible that Matthew and Luke here follow a common tradition and that Mark, not suspecting any *nuance* of prophecy, gave what seemed to him a more natural sequence of events (cf. Jer. 22.19).

"They said" in verse 41 (not in Mark) may again be a translator's addition. But again, if Matthew and Luke were following a common tradition, it may have given verses 40 sqq. as dialogue, not as monologue; cf. Luke 20.16,17. It has been pointed out that the quotation in verse 42 comes from the same psalm (117) from which the crowd borrowed their acclamations on Palm Sunday (verse 9 above). Verse 44 is omitted by some manuscripts and is perhaps out of place here, though it is not a *verbal* transcript of Luke 20.18. The image of the stone falling upon people and breaking them to pieces seems to be borrowed from Dan. 2.44,45. See further, notes on Mark 12.1-12.

22.1-14. *Parable of the Wedding-Feast.* This story finds a rough parallel in Luke (14.16-24), much as the parable of the Talents (Matthew 25.14-30) finds a rough parallel in Luke 19.11-28. In both cases the verbal resemblance is small, whereas commonly, if Matthew and Luke have a passage which is not in Mark, the verbal resemblance is very close. Must we suppose, in both cases, two rival streams of tradition, each preserving a fair *précis* of what our Lord said, but with a varying degree of accuracy? That explanation does not quite fit here, since the context of Luke 14 is obviously different; does not quite fit in Matthew 25, where there are serious variations in the substance of the story. On the whole, it seems better to say that our Lord, like many human preachers, would use the same kind of illustration on different occasions; we have already seen something of this in comparing Matthew 5.3-12 with Luke 6.20-26. In a private conversation, somewhat earlier in his ministry, our Lord compared the kingdom of heaven to a great supper; now, in the course of a disputation with the Pharisees, he compares it in the same way to a wedding-feast. There can be no

doubt in either case that the faithlessness of the Jews and the calling in of the Gentiles are directly envisaged.

Verses 6 and 7 find no parallel in Luke, and appear at first sight unnecessary to the story. The situation is exactly reversed in Luke 19.14 and 27, where Luke, not Matthew, introduces an apparently irrelevant allusion to the king's enemies. It looks as though our Lord had been in the habit of diversifying his favourite stories, now and again, with digressions of this kind, perhaps by way of reminding his hearers that he was talking about a matter of life and death.

Verses 11-13 are in any case peculiar to Matthew. They are evidently a part of the parable; the situation of verse 11 is meant to follow on the events of verse 10. Yet it is not easy to explain this sudden descent from the general to the particular; elsewhere, our Lord's parables take their imagery either from the behaviour of men in the mass (e.g., the Wicked Husbandmen) or from the behaviour of men as individuals (e.g., the Two Sons); only here does he switch over from the one method to the other. Evidently, as in the parable of the Tares, and that of the Drag-net (13.36-43, 47-50), he is warning us that there will still be "scandals" in the Kingdom he is founding. But why one man, instead of a whole class of men, unworthily clad? It is a tempting conjecture, that he had Judas Iscariot especially in mind. There seems to be no foundation for the idea that the host, on such occasions, fitted out his guests. We can only suppose that the casual passers-by (not the down-and-outs of Luke 14.21) had the means, and were given the opportunity, to put on robes of ceremony if they would. In verse 14 "many" and "few" need only imply a larger and a smaller total, as in Num. 26.54, 35.8.

22.15-46. *The day of riddles.* No difficulty occurs, in any of the three Synoptic Gospels, about the first part of this passage; our Lord shews up the inconsistency of the nationalist Pharisees, who would enjoy the benefits of Roman rule without accepting its obligations, and then points out to the Sadducees that the most elementary phrases of Scripture imply personal immortality. The "Herodians" are omitted by Luke; curiously, since Luke seems more interested in the Herods than other New Testament writers. Verse 34 gives a pause to the reader;

why "met together" instead of "met together again" (cf. verse 15)? And why should the controversial defeat of the Sadducees, their rivals, call for special consultations on the part of the Pharisees? Some manuscripts read not "met together", but "flocked to him"; and it seems possible that this was what the translator of Matthew wrote. Nor is there any reason to think that a hostile gesture is implied; if anything, the notion should be something like "rallied to him" (cf. 23.37); the lawyer who makes trial of him in verse 35 is by no means an unfriendly questioner (cf. Mark 12.32-34). For the moment, the Pharisees were impressed; and it was while they were still in that mood (verse 41) that our Lord questioned them, and in no controversial spirit, about the meaning of Psalm 109.

The word "Master" in verse 44 is not necessarily a Divine title, nor does our Lord so use it. He simply assumes, and with justice, that the Pharisees to whom he is speaking identify the mysterious Conqueror of Psalm 109 with the Messiah. But equally they believe that the Messiah will be the Son (that is, the descendant) of David. How could king David, holding such a position in the Providential history of Israel, describe any descendant of his as his "Master", unless it were someone of more than human stature?

23.1-12. *A warning against ostentation.* Of this chapter, only verse 6 finds an echo in Mark. Seven isolated passages of it are found in Luke, mostly in his eleventh chapter. Literary probabilities seem to indicate that verses 13-36, at any rate, form a continuous discourse, not a mere cento of isolated sayings. But it does not follow that it was delivered on this occasion; 24.1 seems to follow naturally on the long scene in the Temple, and chapter 23, an address by our Lord "to the multitudes and to his disciples", may perhaps belong, as Luke suggests, to an earlier period in the ministry.

Meanwhile, it is hardly possible to exaggerate the difficulties created by verse 3—not merely for the Christian commentator, but for commentators of every school. On the face of it, our Lord appears to tell his disciples, and the multitude, to obey the directions given them by the scribes and Pharisees; that is, the traditions which he ridiculed so unmercifully, which his disciples did not in fact keep, which we do not

keep to-day. Having issued this command, he devotes a whole chapter to exposing those traditions in their naked insincerity. What sense can be made of his utterance?

In the first place, we should probably regard verses 1-12 as a wholly different discourse from verses 13-36. It is hardly credible that there should be so much discrepancy, at least on the surface, if we were dealing with a single context. Even if we take verses 1-12 in isolation, how are we to account for "do" and "continue to observe"? The suggestion sometimes made, that the scribes are only to be obeyed when they speak *ex cathedra Moysis*, i.e. repeat something which Moses said, fails to carry conviction; if they sat in the chair of Moses, they did so not as mere echoes of the Law, but as its interpreters. More probably we ought to read verse 3 as a single rhetorical whole, the apparent command having only a permissive force: "Do what they tell you by all means, observe their traditions if you like, but whatever you do don't follow their example". So (according to the most probable interpretation) Ps. 4.5 begins with the words "Be angry, but do not sin", which is not an injunction to lose our tempers. The Hebrew mind does not love subordinate clauses; hence the apparent strangeness of a sentiment like "I will thank thee, O Lord, for being angry with me"—we must read on, to find that the operative words are "and then forgiving me" (Is. 12.1). Our Lord is speaking to Jews; he assumes that they follow the traditions of the Pharisees about the sabbath, about washing of hands, etc.; they are welcome to—only, let them not behave as the Pharisees do!

The "texts" were worn in obedience to a literal interpretation of such passages as Deut. 6.8; the deep hems were an exaggerated observance of Num. 15.38, so that Mark and Luke are not altogether happy in their paraphrase, "enjoy walking in long robes" (Mark 12.38, Luke 20.46). The use of the word "Christ" in verse 10 is unexpected; our Lord usually refers to himself as "the Son of Man", and some have thought that the word was introduced into the text by a copyist, or by the Greek translator of Matthew. But the word here used for "teacher" is literally "a guide", and our Lord himself is our Guide to all knowledge of the Father (Matthew 11.27, John 14.6); meanwhile, he is represented as referring to himself under the title of "Christ" in Mark 9.40.



23.13-36. *Denunciation of the Scribes and Pharisees.* Luke gives several extracts from this discourse (Luke 11.39-52); on his shewing, the audience was a private one, consisting of an unnamed Pharisee and his guests at table. The precise bearing of the quibbles referred to in verses 16-22 is not certain; the clue seems to have been lost. But it looks as if some theologians may have held, in our Lord's day, that swearing by the Temple or by the altar was an impiety, hence the oath was null and void—whereas there was no impiety in swearing by the Temple gold or the offerings on the altar, hence the oath was valid. The *a fortiori* argument of verse 20 thus becomes intelligible. We should expect to find it repeated in verse 21, "The man who swears by the temple swears at the same time by all the offerings in the temple". Instead of this we have quite a different argument, much better suited to the context of 5.33-35; "if you swear by the temple, or by heaven, you are as truly bound as if you had used the name of God, who dwells in the temple, dwells in heaven". It is difficult to feel certain that there has not been a confusion here between two separate utterances, not quite bearing on the same point. Conceivably there has been an error in transmission. Did Matthew write (as from verse 20): "The man who swears by the altar swears at the same time by all that is on it. *The man who swears by the temple* (swears at the same time by all the offerings in the temple. Again, you say, It is wrong to swear by God, but not by the temple, or by heaven. Blind fools, *the man who swears by the temple*) swears at the same time by him who has made it his dwelling-place. And the man who swears by heaven swears not only by God's throne, but by him who sits on it"? It is not difficult to see how the copyist's eye could pass, inadvertently, from the first occurrence of the italicized words to the second occurrence of them; in that case, he would be certain to omit all the words printed in brackets above.

The argument about building the tombs of the prophets (verses 29-31) does not seem cogent either in Matthew or in Luke (11.47,48). In Matthew, it seems to run, "By apologizing for the acts of your forefathers, you shew what a bad stock you come from". In Luke it takes the form, "The undertaker is an accomplice *post factum* of the murderer". In either case it looks as if a step in the argument was wanting. Perhaps our Lord meant, "You people are of the tomb-

building type, you live in the past instead of appreciating the needs of the present. For that reason, the prophets seemed to you dangerous innovators, just as the Son of Man seems to you a dangerous innovator to-day". This would lead up well to the prophecy evidently contained in verse 32. It is fairly clear that Abel and Zacharias are mentioned together in verse 35 because both murders are represented in the Old Testament as crying out for vengeance (Gen. 4.10, II Paralip. 24.22). In Matthew (not in Luke) Zacharias is qualified as the son of Barachias. It was, in fact, Zacharias son of Joiada who was murdered in the Temple court; but Barachias may have been one of his remoter ancestors, since the names of Zacharias and Barachias occur twice elsewhere (Is. 8.2, Zach. 1.1) as running in the same family. But by a curious coincidence, which has often been pointed out, a Zacharias son of Baruch was killed by an act of mob injustice not long before the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 (Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* 5.1). It is conceivable that some over-zealous copyist, getting the name slightly wrong, wrote in "son of Barachias", by way of suggesting that our Lord could prophesy what was to happen in A.D. 68.

23.37-39. *The lament over Jerusalem.* This is placed earlier in Luke (13.34,35). It is possible that "how often" in verse 37 should be understood of our Lord's own visits to Jerusalem, rare as they seem to have been, or of the efforts made by the Apostles, after the Ascension, to convert their fellow-countrymen. But it reads more naturally as a Divine utterance, in the manner of John 8.58. If Luke has given us this passage in its historical setting, verse 39 might be a reference to the triumphal entry into Jerusalem; but it is difficult not to feel that a more remote future is indicated. If the allusion is to the Second Coming, this verse can be quoted in favour of the opinion commonly held, that the Jewish people will acknowledge Christ before that event.

24.1-35. *Our Lord's great prophecy of judgement.* This passage occurs with variants, but at full length, in all three Synoptic Gospels. It seems clear (i) that the Apostles in verse 3 are not asking three questions or two questions, but one: i.e., they assumed that the destruction of Jerusalem would be accompanied by the return of our Lord in judge-

ment; (ii) that our Lord says nothing to disabuse them of this idea, except possibly in verse 36 (see notes on verses 36-51). Hence it is hardly conceivable that the whole passage refers exclusively to remote events, to which we are still looking forward. By a rather free interpretation of the language used, you can just maintain that our Lord spoke *only* about the destruction of Jerusalem, and tacitly refused information about the Second Coming. By supposing that the Evangelists, here as elsewhere, include one or two sayings which really belonged to a different context, you can save the accuracy of the prediction, but at the same time you rob it of all certainty. Is it possible to preserve the unity of the passage, and at the same time to interpret its phrases in their natural sense? Only on the supposition that this was a conditional prophecy (cf. Jonas 3.4 and 10), and that the condition of it, namely, the conversion of the Jews, remained and still remains unfulfilled (cf. Romans 11.26, and notes on II Thess. 2.6). In this way we can see the picture as a continuous whole, and at the same time understand why the fulfilment of it has been only partial.

Verses 4-14 are a caution against too eager anticipations; they refer, no doubt, to the years between the Ascension and A.D. 70, but the lesson conveyed has been, and is, useful at all times of world-upheaval. Verses 10-14 are peculiar to Matthew, and may conceivably belong to another context. In verse 15 the reference is to Daniel 9.27. The word "set up" implies an image or trophy of some kind, and the note "let him who reads this, recognize what it means" would appear to be a claim by the Evangelist, or by a subsequent annotator, that at some time before the fall of Jerusalem this prophecy had been manifestly fulfilled. It is known that the Zealots, a party of nationalist fanatics, took possession of the Temple and committed many impieties there, but no record has come down to us of the actual event referred to. Mark slightly modifies the expression, giving "where it should never stand" instead of "in the holy place". Luke may have found the whole expression unintelligible, and substituted "when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies", perhaps from a different context (cf. Luke 19.43). Verses 16-28 doubtless give a true picture of the privations and perplexities experienced by Christians in Judaea at the time of the siege. It seems natural, in verse 28, to see an allusion to the Roman eagles

gathering round the death-bed of a people. Verse 27, unless we suppose that it has been transferred from some different context, would certainly seem to indicate some close connexion between the fall of Jerusalem and the coming of the Son of Man.

In verses 29-31, Matthew's is the most uncompromising account. Mark says nothing about the Sign of the Son of Man, nothing about the angels' trumpets; and instead of Matthew's "Immediately" he has the more guarded rubric, "In those days". As for Luke, he seems to imply a definite interval between the fall of the city and the Second Coming (see notes on Luke 21.24). If we are to understand Matthew's account as referring *only* to the events of A.D. 70, the "Sign of the Son of Man" will perhaps be the phenomenon obscurely alluded to in Tacitus' *Histories*, 5.13. The sending forth of angels (or rather, messengers) will merely refer to the apostolic preaching, and so on. That the celestial motions of verse 29 are only a metaphor describing the fall of dynasties (cf. Is. 13.10, Ez. 22.7, Joel 2.10 and 3.15) is in itself probable enough. But it must be confessed that this interpretation gives a rather strained sense to the whole passage. All three Synoptic Gospels give the "parable" of the fig-tree, and repeat the solemn assurance of verse 34. "This generation", in the given context, must surely refer to our Lord's own contemporaries. "All these things" must consequently be understood as meaning the fall of Jerusalem, but not the Second Coming; either because our Lord has not been talking about the Second Coming at all, or because its connexion with the fall of Jerusalem depended on a tacit condition which was not in fact fulfilled. See further, notes on Mark 13.1-37, Luke 21.5-38.

24.36-51. *The Second Coming; the duty of watchfulness.* Verse 36 does not occur in Luke, who assigns part of what follows to a different discourse (see Luke 17.26-36, 12.35-46). We cannot be certain that this utterance followed immediately on the Great Prophecy, but in any case it must qualify our notions of the Great Prophecy. Whatever our Lord did or did not mean to do when he answered the question put by his Apostles in verse 3 above, he evidently did not mean to date the Last Judgement with exactitude, since on his own shewing he was not at liberty to do so.



Some important manuscripts read "not even to the Son" after "not even to the angels in heaven", as in Mark. It is not clear whether they originally stood in Matthew, and were omitted by some copyist because of the theological difficulty involved, or whether they have been inserted here to make Matthew correspond with Mark. See notes on Mark 13.32. The principle is in any case clear; we are to be left in ignorance about the date of the Second Coming because we are meant to be, and it is good for us to be, continually on the watch.

25.1-13. *Parable of the Ten Virgins.* This parable, peculiar to Matthew, offers grave difficulties of interpretation. At first sight, it is merely an amplification of 24.36-51; the moral in verse 13 seems to demand this. But if the lesson of it is that we must always be awake, how is it that all the virgins fall asleep, the just as well as the reprobate? It has been suggested that sleep here merely means physical death, as in various other passages. But how is it that no judgement seems to have been passed on the foolish virgins at the time of their physical death, whereas the destinies of Dives and Lazarus are decided from the first (Luke 16.22)? And what is meant by the interval between the Great Cry of verse 6 and the actual coming in verse 10? This interval is surely of capital importance. The foolish virgins do not complain that their lamps *have gone out*, a faulty translation of the older English versions; their lamps "are going out", evidently in the sense that their oil will not last out *till the bridegroom comes*. What is meant by this interval of flickering lights, during which it was almost possible for the foolish virgins to replenish their stock of oil before the Bridegroom came?

Perhaps the most satisfactory explanation of the parable is the following. The kingdom of heaven means, as usual, the Church. "Then" in verse 1 means not *in* A.D. 70 but *after* A.D. 70. In the first age, good and bad Christians alike will be living under the shadow of the Second Coming (all ten virgins awake) and make their calculations accordingly. But as the centuries go by and the Second Coming is delayed ("the bridegroom was long in coming") all ten virgins fall asleep; i.e., all Christians, good as well as bad, begin to think of the Second Coming as something remote. Then, suddenly, a great cry is made; that is, the

portents of the end begin to appear, the Great Tribulation, etc. (We may, perhaps, apply the same principle, in a lesser degree, to all world-catastrophes; or even to the approach of death.) Happy are those who, although taken by surprise like everybody else, are nevertheless prepared because they have kept the habit of charity. What of those others, who have lost it? Will they be able to acclimatize themselves, all of a sudden, to the new situation? Will they find grace to persevere to the end? . . . Clearly, it is never too late to answer the call of grace (Matthew 20.7). There are death-bed conversions; but we must not presume on the fact, and be content to live carelessly.

25.14-30. *Parable of the Talents*. As we have already observed (notes on 22.1-13 above), there is a sister parable to be found in Luke (19.11-28). But the differences are such, that it is best to regard them as two separate utterances, not as two versions of the same utterance. In Matthew, for instance, the initial capital is different, the reward is the same; in Luke there is a flat rate of endowment, but the use made of it is different, and so, correspondingly, are the awards. Our Lord has given us two apparently inconsistent but really correlative side-lights on the paradox of grace and free-will, just as he did in the parable of the Sower and the parable of the Tares (chapter 13 above). See further, notes on Luke 19.11-28.

Accidentally or by design, this paragraph is in some ways a corrective to the foregoing. From the story of the Ten Virgins we might have supposed that the Christian life consisted in merely holding on to something which is in our possession, and contriving to be found with it in our possession when audit-day comes. We might almost have imagined that our Lord left the earth merely in order that he might be able to come on us suddenly and catch us in *flagrante delicto*, untrustworthy servants who had forgotten about him. The man who goes on his travels in verse 14 is no doubt our Lord himself, but nothing is said about the suddenness of his return. Nor are his servants merely to keep something undiminished for him, they are to work for him and earn a reward; the Christian life is to be an advance, and if our Master leaves us alone, it is to give us the opportunity of serving him without, at the time, receiving any encouragement. Whether the talents

are to be understood only of supernatural graces, or of natural endowments as well, does not fully appear. But it has been the guess of mankind that natural endowments are included; the very words "talent" and "talented", as we use them nowadays, are (as a matter of language) an unconscious quotation from this parable. The point of the dialogue in verses 24-27 is that the servant has, perhaps, gauged his master's character aright (elsewhere, Almighty God is compared to an unjust judge, or an unwilling lender, for the sake of a parable), but he has based the wrong conclusion on it. The Christian who, being told to do a minimum in the way of observance, does just that, is not only ungenerous but short-sighted; insistence on the minimum should have encouraged him to do more.

The curious tail-piece of verse 28 is also given in Luke's parable of the pounds; in either case, our Lord seems to be elaborating the same theme which he had dwelt on in Matthew 13.12 (see notes there). The point is that good use of our graces wins more grace, infidelity is punished by loss of the grace we had; we can hardly suppose that there is any exact supernatural equivalent to the process by which the unfaithful servant hands over the misused capital to his rival.

25.31-46. *The service of Christ in his brethren.* Once more we are provided with a corrective. So far, this chapter has represented the Christian life as a business of grudging calculation—the Wise Virgins refusing to share their oil, the Faithful Servants intent on their ledgers. Everything seems to have been done in a kind of commercial spirit; we have spoken in terms of services rendered and rewards duly received. In this last section, we find that those who obtain eternal life are souls too generous, too spontaneous in their love of God, to weigh the cost or the value of what they did for him; they served Christ without thinking. And those who miss eternal life are souls too narrow in their outlook to notice that there has been any dereliction of duty at all. It is not clear how far we ought to press the language of verses 37-39; how much is our Lord thinking of souls outside the visible orbit of his Church? At least we can say that this passage lifts a curtain on the secret of God's uncovenanted mercies.

26.1-16. *The anointing at Bethany.* This story gives rise to curious difficulties of identification. The data, taken severally, are as follows:

(a) At some time during our Lord's ministry, when he was being entertained by a Pharisee named Simon, a woman of the town came in, washed his feet with her tears, and anointed them. Our Lord was criticized for allowing her to approach him (Luke 7.36-50).

(b) Four days at most, it would seem, before the Passion, when our Lord was being entertained at Bethany in the house of Simon "the Leper", an unnamed woman came in and poured precious ointment over his head. She was criticized for the wastefulness of her gesture (Matthew 26.1-16; Mark 14.1-11).

(c) Six days at least, it would seem, before the Passion, when our Lord was being entertained at Bethany, with Lazarus among the guests and Martha serving, "Mary" came in and anointed his feet with precious ointment. She was criticized for the wastefulness of her gesture by Judas Iscariot (John 12.1-8).

Are three separate events involved? Or only two? Or only one?

It is difficult to believe that Luke, whatever tradition he followed, could have so missed the point of the story, if the story was the same; verse 13 here seems to suggest that it was widely known. The name Simon was evidently a common one, and it would not be a very strange coincidence if both incidents happened in the house of somebody called by it. On the other hand, both incidents may have happened, at different times, in the same house; this would be less surprising if the woman was the same, and if she was deliberately reconstructing, in Holy Week, the scene of her former conversion. For the probabilities of this view, see notes on Luke 7.

There can be little doubt that by "Mary" John means St. Mary Magdalen. If she was in fact the heroine of this story, why do Matthew and Mark both pass it over in silence? The simplest explanation seems to be, that St. Mary Magdalen herself did not want publicity; she might be mentioned in lists, she must be cited as a witness of the Resurrection, but for the rest she would not have her story told, at least in Palestine. Matthew, therefore, is silent, and Mark followed Matthew, or the tradition which Matthew followed. John, writing after



her death, has filled in the picture for us. (The identity of St. Mary Magdalen with the sister of Martha has here been assumed; see further, notes on Luke 10 and John 12.)

That Judas was her foremost critic, we may well believe; and indeed, verse 14 here, with its parallel in Mark, suggests as much. But evidently his protest was supported—quite possibly by one who had been a tax-gatherer. The other discrepancies involved by John's account are in reality less serious. Verse 2 of this chapter does not necessarily give the date of the meal at Bethany, which may have been inserted after verse 5 so as to explain the treachery of Judas. That our Lord's head should be anointed, when once the pot of ointment had been broken, was a common gesture of hospitality; the much rarer courtesy which followed, the anointing of his feet, was perhaps only visible to those close by (see notes on John 12). Any explanation seems better than supposing the occurrence of two almost exactly similar incidents within a few days of one another.

Verse 8 gains added point if we suppose the woman to have been a penitent, who had already sold most of her finery. In verse 11 "always" has the sense of "continually"; the sentiment should not be quoted as a prediction that poverty will never be abolished. Luke gives the story of the betrayal at the beginning of his 22nd chapter. Neither he nor Mark mentions the exact sum of money which changed hands.

26.17-25. *The Last Supper*. Is the date indicated in verse 17 the day on which the Paschal lamb was eaten? Or the day before? Or the day after? In strict language, the "first of the days of unleavened bread" should mean the day after, i.e. the first full day, sunrise to sunset, on which leavened bread was forbidden. But the whole context shews that this was not intended by Matthew or Mark (14.12). It would be natural to suppose that the day of the Passover itself is in question, and that the last meal which our Lord ate with his disciples was the Paschal meal. But the whole of St. John's account takes it for granted that the Crucifixion took place on the day of the Passover itself, and that the Last Supper took place on the day before—in that particular year, a Thursday. (Cf. especially John 13.29.)

The Greek Fathers, accordingly, interpret verse 17 in a way of their own. "The day which has priority in respect of the unleavened bread" means, not the first day on which unleavened bread was eaten, but the day before any unleavened bread was eaten; in that year, a Thursday. Our Latin translation will thus be an inaccurate translation, although the mistake would be a natural one. Some think, in the same way, that Luke 2.2 speaks, not of the register which was first made when Cyrinus was governor, but the one made before Cyrinus was governor (see notes there). And in John 1.15 and 30 the words "who takes rank before me" literally mean "who was first of me". This is perhaps the best solution of a vexed controversy; we should translate the Greek of verse 17 as meaning "On the day before the feast of unleavened bread began"—that is, Maundy Thursday, since all leaven would have disappeared by sundown on Good Friday.

If we take this view, the Gospel accounts do not necessarily imply that the Last Supper was a Paschal meal at all (see, however, notes on Luke 22.15). The word translated "room" in Mark 14.14 would be more naturally understood, in the Greek, of a house or at least a suite of rooms where the traveller finds bed as well as board; it would be quite intelligible, then, that our Lord and his disciples should lodge and sup there on Maundy Thursday, making preparation meanwhile for the Paschal meal next day. It has been suggested, however, that the Galilean pilgrims may have been keeping the Pasch on a different day from their hosts at Jerusalem, since the days were reckoned from the date at which the new moon was *seen*, so that a local mist might make a day's difference in a given area. Alternatively, our Lord may have deliberately anticipated the ceremonies of the morrow, on his own authority, and some would quote Luke 22.15 as evidence of this.

Verse 25 is peculiar to Matthew. In Mark no answer is given to any of the Apostles, as far as we know, when they ask, "Is it I?" In Luke the whole incident seems to occur after, not before, the institution of the Eucharist (see notes there). In John a private sign is given to the Beloved disciple by the handing of the sop, and Judas is told to be quick about his errand (John 13.21-30). It seems evident from the whole context that our Lord's words to Judas were spoken in a low tone, perhaps when other Apostles were asking the same question at the

same time, or else that the formula "Thy own lips have said it" (cf. verse 64 below) was interpreted as an ambiguous reply. That Mark says nothing of the incident need not, perhaps, surprise us; plainly, at this point in the story, each Evangelist had his own private sources of information, and may have preferred to desert the common tradition where he could not verify it; cf. also notes on Mark 14, John 13.

26.26-35. *Institution of the Eucharist; St. Peter's denial foretold.* "Shed for you" in verse 28 reads, in the Greek, "which is being shed for many", not (as in the Latin) "which is about to be shed for many". If Matthew and Mark were our only sources of information, it would be natural to imagine that our Lord used this phrase when he was in the act of filling the Cup, suiting the action to the word: "This is my Blood that is being poured out for you". The reference to a new "testament", or "covenant" suggests that our Lord is thinking of the old Jewish sacrifices in which the blood of the victim was poured out or sprinkled; cf. Heb. 9.20, where the words "This is the blood of the covenant" are quoted. The action of filling the Chalice would thus emphasize his own character of Victim. But tradition does not seem to have fastened on the gesture as specially significant; indeed, if St. Paul's formula in I Cor. 11.25 is complete, the word itself could disappear. It seems best, therefore, to give the verb a future sense, as our Latin version does; our Lord spoke in Aramaic, a language which does not distinguish tenses with the accuracy of the Greek. Luke's account is the only one which raises a major problem about the words of Institution; see notes on Luke 22.14-20. The problems raised by verse 29 will also be best considered in their Lucan context.

"You will all lose courage over me"; literally, "you will be scandalized in me". As usual, the sense of the verb is that the Apostles will be taken off their guard, as if by a hidden snare; the ordeal of Gethsemani will be a more severe test than they had bargained for. It would be tempting to take the verb in verse 32 literally, "I will lead you on" as a shepherd leads his flock; but the usage of the verb in the New Testament makes it probable that the meaning is simply "I will reach Galilee before you". This conversation, with the prophecy of St. Peter's denial, is given more fully in Luke; see note on Luke 22.24-38.

26.36-46. *The Agony in the Garden.* It is not clear whether the three Apostles overheard fragments of our Lord's prayer, and reported them, or whether (as with the Temptation) he told them afterwards what had happened. In either case, we should be prepared for slight differences between the formulas used. Matthew and Mark agree in describing our Lord as "bewildered", like a man who does not know which way to turn; it is not clear what was the other Aramaic verb rendered as "grieved" in Matthew and "stupefied" (as if with fear) in Mark. Matthew's account of his prayer is at first sight the most disconcerting, since it appears, both in verse 39 and in verse 42, to cast doubts on the Divine Omnipotence. But Mark (14.35) adds the same qualification, and Luke is no doubt right in interpreting "if it be possible" as "if it be thy will". It seems clear that our Lord, in his perfect Humanity felt a nervous shrinking from death, and that his human Will rose superior to it; we shall not do well to pry more closely into the psychology of the Incarnate.

Our Lord's utterance in verse 45 has been variously interpreted. It has been read as an ironical invitation, "Go on sleeping now, if you have the heart to"; but this seems to neglect the word "hereafter", which can hardly be translated "now" in the sense required. On the other hand, the rendering "Find some later, more suitable occasion for going to sleep" reads too much into the context. The words which follow, "Rise up, let us go on our way", forbid us to suppose that our Lord means his Apostles to go on sleeping there and then. Perhaps it is best to treat the imperatives as a kind of long-term permission: "Your vigil is over now; neither sentries nor bodyguard can be of any use to me". Mark adds "Enough (has been done)", which seems to support this interpretation.

26.47-56. *The Betrayal.* All four Evangelists describe this scene, and their accounts are in general agreement (see, however, notes on John 18.1-11). But each has his own story to tell; only Matthew, for instance, gives the question of verse 50. Perhaps Mark thought it would confuse the literal-minded reader; how should there be any doubt in the matter? Luke has given us a separate and a more obviously rhetorical enquiry. Matthew and John both record the command given in verse 52, but the



reference to legions of angels is peculiar to Matthew. Curiously, only Luke mentions the healing of Malchus' ear. Grammatically, verse 56 may or may not be part of what our Lord said (cf. 1.22 and 21.4 above); Mark (14.49) attributes the comment to our Lord himself.

26.57-75. *Christ before the Council; St. Peter's denial.* All three Synoptic Gospels are agreed that our Lord was led off to trial before the high priest, whom Matthew names Caiphas; John probably means us to understand the same (see notes on John 18.12-27). Matthew and Mark, on a surface reading, seem to imply that the meeting of the Council was held at night (which would have been illegal), and that Peter's denial came afterwards, or possibly at the same time. Luke, on the other hand, puts Peter's denial first, and explicitly assures us that the interrogation before the Council took place "when it was day". Probably Matthew and Mark have inverted the historical order of the two incidents, on the ground that our Lord's condemnation is a more central point in the story. John has given us (18.19-24) an account of the interview with Caiphas (or, less probably, with Annas); Matthew and Mark have passed it over in silence, and narrated the public trial at day-break without explaining when it really happened. See further, notes on Luke 22.54-71.

The charge brought in verse 61 is probably a reminiscence, distorted by accident or by design, of the words our Lord actually used in John 2.19. In Mark (14.58) the utterance is quoted differently; our Lord had promised to replace "this temple that is made by men's hands" by another, not of human building. Possibly this is a sample of the disagreement between various witnesses brought forward (Mark 14.56). Or conceivably our Lord had made some remark of the kind suggested, and Mark is at pains to quote it in its original form, or has supplied the words "made with hands", "not made with hands", to explain the sense in which it was originally made. Matthew's formula is more likely to be a verbatim account of what the witnesses said, both because it is simpler and because it sounds more damaging.

The High Priest's challenge in verse 63 is represented by Luke as two successive questions, "Art thou the Christ? . . . Art thou the Son of God?" The tradition followed by Matthew and Mark differs from

Luke as a *précis* differs from a verbatim report. Luke, like Matthew, gives our Lord's reply in what is obviously the authentic form, "Thy own lips have said it". Here, at least, it is quite impossible to suppose that Mark is the source either of Matthew or of Luke; they have both given us a literal rendering of the Aramaic phrase, whereas Mark prefers a formula which is, in the context, a legitimate translation. Whether or no this Jewish idiom left a loop-hole for doubt (see note on verse 25 above), our Lord's reply was evidently meant to be unequivocal, and was in fact so understood. Mark has also omitted, in the second half of verse 64, the baffling words "from now on". The sense of them seems to be no more than "again"; cf. 23.39, and verse 29 above.

It seems probable that, by literal count, St. Peter denied his Master four times. (A) To a maidservant, by the fireside in the court. (B) To another maidservant, who was acting as portress, just outside the court. (C) To a man, at the fireside. (D) To another man there, a kinsman of Malchus. Matthew and Mark treat C and D as a single incident. Luke gives us A, C and D; John gives us B, C and D. See further, notes on Mark 14.69, John 18.17. It appears that all the denials took place while our Lord was being interrogated privately by Caiphas, and before the meeting of the Council, which took place at dawn. When Malchus' kinsman identified St. Peter, it was just before dawn, which could be described as "the second cock-crow" (as in Mark) on the understanding that the cocks had already crowed at midnight, or simply as "cock-crow" (as in the other Gospels).

27.1-10. *The remorse of Judas*. The story is not told in any of the other Gospels, though Judas' suicide is referred to, somewhat confusedly, in Acts 1.18 (see notes there). Matthew seems to have been specially struck by the fulfilment of a prophecy, and perhaps the other Evangelists omitted it because the fulfilment was so obscure and the prophecy so difficult to trace. It contains a vague echo of Jer. 32.7-9, but the main part of it is clearly a reference to Zach. 11.12-13. Possibly the two prophecies had been conflated in some collection of Old Testament references (cf. notes on Mark 1.2). But the passage of Zachary, as preserved in our text, has no reference to a field belonging to a potter. Our text may well have suffered from corruption; the two verses do not

really fit into the context, and look suspiciously like a fragment which belongs elsewhere. It runs: "So they paid me for my wages thirty pieces of silver. Why, the Lord said, here is a princely sum they rate me at! Throw it to the craftsman yonder. So there, in the Lord's temple, I threw the craftsman my thirty pieces of silver". If this is accurate, we can only suppose that Matthew's imagination was caught by the words *thirty pieces of silver, craftsman* (or *potter*) and *temple*, and he hailed the coincidence as Providential without stopping to enquire whether there was really very much in common between the two situations.

Aceldama, here, is the name given to the piece of land purchased by the Temple authorities; it was purchased with blood-money—the whole story, told thus, falls into place. In Acts 1.18 the suggestion seems to be that Aceldama was the name given to the piece of land where Judas committed suicide, and that he himself had purchased it, but the wording of the passage is very obscure. "To this day" in verse 8 evidently implies a significant interval between the time of our Lord's Passion and that at which the Gospel was composed—or possibly, that at which it was translated into Greek, since a foot-note of the kind would have been within the province of a translator. How long an interval will it have been? In a modern document, we should guess a generation or more; but the phrase "to this day" was something of a *phrase toute faite* on Jewish lips, and twenty years or so would perhaps satisfy the conditions. It is evidently unlikely that the words were written after the destruction of Jerusalem; such appeals to tradition imply a continuity of culture. The same considerations apply to 28.15 below.

27.11-26. *The trial before Pilate.* Luke and John give a fuller account of our Lord's process; Matthew is closely in line with Mark, but is our only authority for the dream, and for Pilate's gesture in publicly washing his hands. Mark and Luke may have been acquainted with the facts, and nevertheless decided to pass them over in silence. They probably wrote at Rome, and the Roman Church, as St. Paul's epistle indicates, held a precarious balance between a Jewish and a Gentile element. No need, then, to underline the responsibility of the Jewish people for our Lord's death, which was on other grounds sufficiently evident. More curiously, Matthew is the only Evangelist who tells us

nothing about the criminal record of Barabbas. Perhaps inadvertence, perhaps want of information, will account for his omission of so telling a rhetorical point.

27.27-44. *The Crucifixion.* Verse 33 contains a subtle indication that our Greek text of Matthew is a rendering from a foreign language; "a place called Golgotha, that is, a place called (the place) of a skull" is an overcharged formula, only intelligible on the understanding that the first four words stood in the original and the rest is foot-note; contrast the more natural phrasing of Mark 15.22. In verse 34, "gall" is probably a faulty rendering by the translator of the Aramaic for "myrrh" (cf. Mark 15.23); in Aramaic, the two words have a deceptive resemblance. Observe that Matthew gives no cross-reference to Ps. 68.22; nor do the other Evangelists, though Luke has "vinegar" instead of "wine". Sour wine mixed with myrrh was provided to deaden the pain of execution; why did our Lord taste it, if he did not mean to drink? Perhaps in recognition of a kindness. All through the rest of this passage Matthew and Mark are closely in line, except for Mark's curious time-reference in 15.25 (see notes there). Verse 43 (Matthew only) is perhaps a reference, added by the narrator, to Wisd. 2.13 and 18.

27.45-54. *Our Lord's death.* In verse 49 "the rest said" is perhaps a false translation from the Aramaic; in Mark, the soldier who proffers the sponge himself makes the suggestion about Elias. No mockery need have been intended; it may have been a genuine effort to prolong life in the hope of some miraculous intervention; a Roman soldier will have had his superstitions. The cry of verse 50 may have been Luke's "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit", or, more probably, John's "It is achieved". The rending of the Temple veil is mentioned by all three Synoptic Gospels; the remaining phenomena of verses 51-53 are peculiar to Matthew. It has been suggested above that the Evangelists, when they came to the Passion, made use of the common tradition only where they could verify it by private information; Matthew seems more in touch than the others with local tradition (cf. 27.8, 28.15). The Harrowing of Hell receives independent, if obscure, confirmation from I Peter 3.19. It is unnecessary to ask what exactly



the centurion meant by "Son of God"; in any case, the impression made on him was sufficient to extort the truth from his lips. See further, notes on Mark 15.33-47 and Luke 23.44-56.

27.55-66. *Our Lord's burial.* The list of the holy women is given as in Mark, except that Salome is replaced by, or more probably identified as, the mother of the sons of Zebedee (cf. note on 20.20 above). See further, notes on John 19.25. Their importance here is that they were witnesses of the entombment (cf. verse 61). The part played by Joseph of Arimathaea is mentioned in all four Gospels. Verses 62-66 are our only authority for believing that the tomb was guarded. We might have expected a reference to the soldiers, for example, in Mark 16.2. But, on the face of it, the precaution was an afterthought, which only took effect on Holy Saturday, when the scene was deserted, and it seems likely that it was deserted again when the women reached the tomb. Neither the priests nor the soldiers stood to gain by publicizing the story of their ill success. The facts may never have come to light until long afterwards, at least so far as the Christian community was concerned; cf. notes on 28.1-15.

28.1-15. *Our Lord's Resurrection.* The evidences of a common tradition, somehow linking the records of the first three Evangelists, grow fainter with the story of the Passion, and in the Resurrection narrative they have almost completely disappeared. In the whole of this chapter there are less than fifty words which Matthew has in common with the other Synoptic Gospels, chiefly in verse 1 and verses 5-8. Each author seems to have followed his own plan; and Matthew, for whatever reason, seems much less concerned than the others to produce a catena of Resurrection appearances; he hurries on to the end of his story. The most remarkable feature about it is that he does not mention any appearance of our Lord to his Apostles in Judaea; indeed, if we had no alternative sources of information, verse 7 would naturally lead us to suppose that he met them only in Galilee. But it is to be remembered that the Christians for whom St. Matthew wrote had been "put through" the evidences for the Resurrection before they were baptized (cf. I Cor. 15.3-8). These could be taken as read;

Matthew is only concerned to shew that the prophecy made in 26.32 was verified—there might be sudden appearances in and around Jerusalem, but it was in Galilee that the true and satisfying reunion took place.

Verses 1-8 seem to combine, rather confusingly, two different strands of narrative. One, peculiar to Matthew, no doubt depends on the same authority which gave him his evidence for verses 11-15. Very early in the morning, before the women arrived, the stone was mysteriously rolled away (our Lord having already risen), and the soldiers were alarmed by the sight of an angel sitting on it. At first they were dazed, but afterwards made their way back to the city, ahead of the women (verse 11) and told their story. So much is derived from Matthew's private source. Meanwhile, as we know from Mark, the holy women arrived, and found the angel inside, not outside the tomb. Probably the soldiers had already left, but it is doubtful whether Matthew was aware of this; verse 5 suggests that the angel is saying "You must not be afraid, as these soldiers are afraid." The "you" seems to be emphatic. The context also suggests, although it is not stated, that Matthew thinks of the angel as still sitting on the stone, outside the tomb; the tradition he was following had not made the point clear, as it was clear to Mark.

"On the night after the sabbath" is literally "late of the sabbath"; the context shews that we must read this as meaning "too late for it to be the sabbath any longer", so that journeying was permitted. The Vulgate interprets the "great trembling" of verse 2 as an earthquake; but the Greek word might be a shock of any kind, or indeed a mere description of the effect made on the soldiers (the same word is used in verse 4). Verses 9 and 10 do not appear in Mark; but if, as seems possible, Mark's Gospel was mutilated at the end and subsequently patched, there may have been a lost passage in the Gospel as Mark originally wrote it, describing our Lord's meeting with the holy women as in Matthew. See further, notes on John 20.1-17. Verses 11-15, with verses 2-4 above and verses 62-66 of the previous chapter, probably depend on the belated admissions of one of the people concerned. They may have come to light after the Gospels were written, and been inserted by Matthew as a postscript.

28.16-20. *The final commission in Galilee.* The best commentary on verse 17 is perhaps John 21.4-8. It is not a question of doubt, but of failure to recognize our Lord at a distance, as we see from verse 18 (cf. also notes on John 21.1-14). Mark 16.14-20, Luke 24.50-53, and Acts 1.6-9 shew that this was not our Lord's last interview with his Apostles. But for Matthew the solemn delegation of authority to his Church is the climax of the story.

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK

1.1-13. *Our Lord's baptism and temptation.* See notes on Matthew 3.1-4.11. It would appear that Mark has followed Matthew, or some source which he shared with Matthew, in quoting Is. 40.3 *à propos* of St. John the Baptist's mission. But he has prefixed to it a quotation of his own, from Mal. 3.1, apparently not noticing that the rubric "It is written in the prophecy of Isaias" no longer applies with accuracy. It may be that the two quotations occurred, one after the other, in some catena of prophecies which was confusedly edited; cf. note on Matthew 27.9. For the adaptation of the passage from Malachy, cf. note on Matthew 11.10. Matthew, writing for a public to whom the career of St. John was familiar, is content to tell us that he baptized, as if it were a matter generally known; Mark and Luke describe it as "a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins", as if to distinguish it from the baptism (of faith?) bestowed in the Christian Church.

The whole of this section, especially verses 9-13, suggests that the author is condensing; as a rule, if Mark describes an incident at all, he does so with some fulness of detail. It is as if he were determined to hurry on to verse 16, where St. Peter begins to be an eye-witness. "Sent him out" in verse 12 is literally "cast him out"; but if Mark was following an Aramaic original, the verb probably meant no more than "caused him to go"; cf. Matthew 9.38, with its aspiration that the Lord of the harvest will "cast out" more labourers for the harvesting. Mark's choice of verbs often suggests that he is not writing in his own native language when he writes Greek. That our Lord "was with the beasts" during the Forty Days is a graphic touch peculiar to Mark.

1.14-20. *Call of four Apostles.* See notes on Matthew 4. The concentrated effect of verse 14 might be taken to imply, even more definitely than Matthew 4.12 and 17, that our Lord did not make his first public appearance until after St. John's imprisonment. The Fourth



Gospel seems to correct this impression; cf. especially John 4.2, where our Lord and his Fore-runner are preaching simultaneously, and each has a group of "disciples" round him. In view of John 1.40 sqq., it is reasonable to suppose that these included, in our Lord's case, Andrew and Simon and the sons of Zebedee. Yet Matthew and Mark both write as if our Lord met them for the first time *after* St. John's imprisonment. Matthew actually speaks of "two brothers, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew"; Mark is less formal about introducing the names, but perhaps only because they were so well known to Christians. For the consideration of these difficulties, see notes on John 1.35-51, and 4.1-15.

1.21-28. *An exorcism.* This story is not preserved in Matthew. That Matthew should have omitted it if it was included in the sources which lay at his disposal, is hardly conceivable; it seems more natural to suppose that Mark had it from private information, and that Luke had it from Mark (he gives it almost in the same words). In verse 23 the text runs literally "And immediately in the synagogue there was a man". The strangely inappropriate use of the adverb (which occurs nine times in the present chapter alone) makes it probable that Mark is here translating from an Aramaic source. The word in the original was no doubt the word "Behold", so dear to the Jewish narrator. "Behold" occurs about sixty times in Matthew, only eight times in Mark; whereas "Immediately" occurs more than forty times in Mark, less than twenty times in Matthew. It is not clear whether our Lord commanded silence merely in deference to the sanctity of the occasion, or because the unclean spirit threatened to disclose his secret prematurely. The title "holy one of God", that is "he whom God has sanctified", is not found elsewhere in the Synoptic Gospels; it occurs twice in John (6.70, used by St. Peter, and 10.36, used by our Lord of himself). Verse 34 below proves that these disclosures were unwelcome, at least in the early stages of our Lord's ministry; verse 45 gives a further reason why publicity had to be avoided.

1.29-45. *Simon's wife's mother; a leper cured.* See notes on Matthew 8.1-4 and 14-17; Mark's order of events is followed in Luke. Verses

35-39 do not occur in Matthew at all; they suggest a personal reminiscence contributed by St. Peter, not specially important to the story, but affording a welcome glimpse of our Lord's inner life. The verbs in verse 43 are again perhaps over-coloured (see note on verse 12 above); "cast him out, fuming with indignation" probably means no more than "sent him away with strict directions".

2.1-12. *The palsied man.* See notes on Matthew 9.1-8; Luke's order agrees with Mark's. In verse 2, the Latin suggests "in a house", but the Greek may mean "at home". Our Lord made his preaching centre, and his home as far as he had one, at Capharnaum, and it is not always clear whether a house or *the* house is referred to. The details given in verse 4 were apparently unknown to Matthew's sources; he would hardly have omitted them, since they explain the "faith" of verse 5. Mark says that the four men "unroofed the roof, and dug out" (this last is perhaps one of his inappropriate verbs); Luke is content to tell us that they let the bed down "through the tiles". Archaeology cannot do much to solve the difficulty which immediately occurs to us, namely, what happened about the rafters; tiles did not hang in the air in the first century any more than in our own. Presumably the house was of no great pretensions, and the cross-beams which supported the tiles were so roughly laid on as to be removable, and replaceable, without much effort. The words "in his spirit" (verse 8) seem to emphasize a kind of superhuman knowledge which is implied, but not clearly indicated, by Matthew's account.

2.13-22. *Two questions answered.* See notes on Matthew 9.9-17. Matthew has given us his own name, where Mark and Luke give Levi. There are references in the Fathers which suggest that Levi was a separate person, but this can hardly be maintained in view of the close resemblance between the three Synoptic accounts. Evidently St. Matthew, after the fashion of the Apostles, had a nickname or alias, adopted after his call. Probably he was called Levi at birth, and Mark has called him so here in the interests of historical accuracy; whereas he himself (or possibly his translator) thought it simplest to give the name he ordinarily went by. A further problem is raised when Mark

gives the name of his father as Alphaeus (or perhaps, more accurately, Halphaeus). Since another Apostle, James the Less, had a father of this name, some manuscripts read "James" instead of "Levi"; but this can hardly be more than a clumsy guess. Matthew, it appears, like James, had a father called Halphaeus; that it was the same man is highly improbable, since Matthew and James are nowhere bracketed in any list of the Apostles. On the name Halphaeus, see further, notes on John 19.25.

The setting of what follows has given rise to some confusion. "His house" in verse 15 must mean, not our Lord's own house, but Matthew's; this is clear from Luke 5.29. But the translator of Matthew probably thought that our Lord's own house was meant. "They" in verse 18 probably means John's disciples, as in Matthew, but Luke seems to have understood it of the Pharisees; it is not likely that some third party comes on the scene. In the same verse, it is not clear whether Mark means that the Pharisees and the disciples of John were fasting at that particular moment, or that they were in the habit of fasting at certain times.

2.23-3.6. *On keeping the Sabbath.* See notes on Matthew 12.1-14. Mark is responsible for an added difficulty which has exercised generations of commentators; he represents our Lord as giving a false date in verse 26. Not Abiathar, but his father Achimelech, was high priest when David and his men ate the hallowed bread (I Kings 21.1; cf. 22.20). It must be confessed that Abiathar is an elusive figure. In II Kings 8.17 and I Paralip. 24.6 it is the name given, not to the son but to the father of Achimelech; and in III Kings 4.4 "Sadoc and Abiathar were the priests" in king Solomon's time, although we have just heard (III Kings 2.27) that Solomon dismissed him. In I Paralip. 18.16 it is Abimelech (not Achimelech), son of Abiathar, that is priest under king David. Thus a fault of memory would be pardonable; the question remains, whose memory was at fault. That our Lord himself used the words "while Abiathar was high priest" would be an unwarrantable conclusion; the words might equally well be editorial, and the fact that only one of the Synoptic Gospels reports them suggests that the note was

added, either by Mark himself or more probably by some early copyist, too late to have any effect on the other Gospel records.

Verse 27 occurs in Mark only; an independent reminiscence, not necessarily belonging to this actual context.

In verse 5, Mark has included a reminiscence which looks as if it came from an eye-witness. "He looked round on them all in anger, grieved at the hardness of their hearts"; it fills in the picture of our Lord's complete humanity, when we see his eyes flash with indignation in the presence of culpable prejudice. But it is possible that Luke, who writes simply "looking round on them all", may have preferred to tone down the picture. The relations between Jewish and Gentile Christians at Rome, at the time when he wrote, were probably such as demanded considerable forbearance, and it may have seemed the wrong moment to overstress our Lord's attitude; cf. Rom. 14. There is no reason to suspect a similar reticence on the part of Matthew, who gives the mere outlines of the story.

Verse 6, in parallel though less definite forms, is the epilogue to the miracle of the withered hand both in Matthew and in Luke. It is somewhat surprising to find the opposition to our Lord so crystallized at such an early stage in his ministry; Matthew, it is to be noticed, seems to give a later and perhaps more plausible date for it (12.14, after the Mission of the Apostles). The suspicion suggests itself that Mark, followed by Luke, has artificially collected a series of collisions between our Lord and the Pharisees, some of which belong to a later period. Even if the Pharisees were quick to take alarm, it is difficult to see why the Herodians should have been represented at the conclave. Presumably, from the name, they were partisans of Herod's dynasty, who would have liked to see him master of Judaea as well as Galilee; they would not be interested in questions of fasting, or of keeping the sabbath.

3.6-19. *Appointment of the Twelve.* The names of the Apostles are given in Matthew 10.1-4, and their mission follows immediately; Mark describes their mission later (6.7-13). The rest of this section, though there are echoes of it in Luke 6.17, appears to belong to a source not used by Matthew. It is loosely knit and somewhat inconclusive, as if



Mark had been working over some notes left by another man, determined to miss out nothing but uncertain what the bearing of them was. Verse 7 does not really arise out of verse 6; an adjournment to the lake-side gave our Lord protection, not from the plots of his enemies, but from the pressure of the crowd. Verse 9 foreshadows a means of escape which is not in fact adopted till 4.1. Verses 11 and 12 are hardly more than a repetition of 1.34. The list of the Apostles is one we might have constructed from Matthew and Luke, except for the name Boanerges. This, though curiously transliterated, obviously represents a genuine reminiscence; it is not repeated elsewhere in the New Testament.

3.20-35. *Interruptions.* As before, we may translate "into a house" or "into the house"; the transition from verse 19 is sudden, and perhaps artificial; we do not expect to hear that our Lord came straight from the mountain-side into a house full of people. Verse 21 is singularly obscure; the natural meaning of the Greek would be that the people close to our Lord's side at the moment, his disciples, went out of the house for some purpose. Accordingly, it has been suggested that we ought to translate "His disciples went out of the house to control the crowd; they said it must be mad". But we do not call a crowd mad when it pushes and jostles as crowds do. The disciples, evidently, did not go out of the house to put pressure on our Lord, who was inside; "those who were nearest him" must have some more general application. Ordinarily it is rendered "his kinsfolk", as (possibly) in Dan. 13.33; but the sense is unnatural, and gives no value to the word "went out"; where did they go out from? "The neighbours" gives altogether a better sense; it does not matter much whether we imagine them as old acquaintances from Nazareth, or as residents of one particular quarter in Capharnaum. It would be a mistake to overestimate the seriousness of the whole situation; what happened, surely, was that "the neighbours came rushing out to stop him; Why, they said, the man must be out of his wits!" This well-meaning, worldly estimate is deliberately put side by side with the prejudiced conclusions of the Pharisees. Verses 22-30 are the equivalent of Matthew 12.24-32; verses 31-35 of Matthew 12.46-50. We cannot be certain whether the Family

Council of verse 31 is connected in any way with the "neighbours" of verse 21. Perhaps Mark did not know; if he did, he does not tell us. The identification is not impossible, since we know (John 7.4) that our Lord was not, at this date, a hero to his own clansmen. It may be that among the crowd of interfering neighbours there were some blood-relations; if so, it is not surprising that they should have brought our Lord's Mother with them; it was obviously their best chance of getting a hearing. But, for all we know, the family group who wanted to see our Lord may actually have meant to warn him of the neighbours' intentions. See further, notes on Matthew 12.22-50. Mark adds one detail in verse 34 which suggests a picture unfamiliar to Christian art, that of the disciples sitting round our Lord, on the ground perhaps, while he preaches.

4.1-20. *The Sower*. See notes on Matthew 13.1-23. In verse 10, by the reading of the best manuscripts, our Lord's disciples "asked him the parables" (so the Revised Version). This is not English; is it Greek? And why "the parables", rather than "the parable", as in 7.17 below? It looks as if there had been some confusion; either in the text, or in Mark's understanding of his sources. Verse 13 certainly suggests that a complaint had been made, not about parables in general but about the parable of the Sower in particular (so Luke 8.9).

Verse 12, literally translated, would run "*So that* they may watch and watch . . .", and some difficulty has been felt about this use of the final conjunction. Isaiah (6.10) might be encouraged, with something of irony, to undertake a preaching mission which would only have the effect of making his audience more rebellious than ever. But would our Lord have borrowed the language of cynicism to describe his own mission? Nor, if our Lord's answer be thus interpreted, is it an answer to the question under discussion. The Apostles want to know why he speaks in parables; and if his aim had been merely to shock or to antagonize his own people, he could have done that all the more effectively by speaking his mind openly, and not using parables at all. There can be little doubt that the words "so that" have the force of "so that the prophecy might be fulfilled which says that". Constantly in the New Testament the fulfilment of a prophecy is represented as *the reason why*

the thing happened. The idea is that of inevitable appropriateness, not precisely that of a Divine decree fulfilled.

Verse 13 runs literally "Do you not understand this parable? (Or perhaps, You do not understand this parable.) How then are you to understand all parables?" This seems to contain an implied promise that the Apostles themselves are expected to shew a special aptitude; cf. John 3.10. But, since the sentence is in effect a negative one, "all" might just have its Hebrew sense of "any"; "If you cannot understand a simple parable like this, how are you going to understand any parables at all?" In verse 16 (and so in verses 18 and 20) the translation usually given is "those who are sown upon the rocky (or thorny, or good) ground", but this obscures the whole meaning of the parable; the human heart is not the seed sown, but the soil which receives it. The construction is really "those who are sown-upon on to rocky ground", etc. Cf. Jer. 31.27, "I will sow Israel and Juda (with) seed".

4.21-34. *Further parables.* At the beginning of this section Mark seems to have collected five different sayings, which may well have belonged to five different contexts. The rubric "And he said to them", twice repeated, perhaps indicates that the thread which connects them is more apparent than real. Verse 21 comes much more naturally in the setting of Matthew 5.15; verse 22 acquires a clearer meaning in Matthew 10.26; and the second half of verse 24 surely belongs to the context of Matthew 7.2. Verse 25 is more puzzling still. It seems clearly in place in Matthew 25.29 (Parable of the Talents) and equally so in Luke 19.26 (Parable of the Pounds). Yet not only in Mark, but in all three Synoptic Gospels, it also occurs with far less appropriateness in this conversation which follows on the Parable of the Sower (see Matthew 13.12, Luke 8.18). Even so, Matthew's setting seems preferable. "If a man is rich, gifts will be made to him; if he is poor, even the little he has will be taken away from him" does seem connected with the contrast between the Apostles, who have the seeing eye, the hearing ear, and those others who are only allowed to hear the word in parables, and misunderstand what they hear. Whereas in Mark and Luke it seems to have no context whatever. It looks as if Mark had taken this verse over, either from Matthew or from a common source,

but had decided to hold it over till after the explanation of the Parable, and had then proceeded to associate with it several other sayings which he wanted to fit in somewhere, but had not been able to fit in anywhere else. Luke will have followed Mark, with very little alteration.

There remains the obscure half verse "Look well what it is that you hear"—in Luke, "Look well how you listen". There have been well-meant efforts to prove that it is explained by the rest of verse 24, but they are plainly unsuccessful; nor does Luke agree, since he does not (in this passage) quote the words about "The measure in which you give" at all. The utterance may, quite possibly, have been part of what our Lord said when he was asked why he taught in parables. But it seems safest to admit that we cannot be sure of its context, or (consequently) of its exact bearing.

Verses 26-29 contain a parable peculiar to Mark. It is plainly Messianic, and plainly it is a sister parable to that of the Tares, which Matthew gives in the corresponding place (Matthew 13.24-30). In Mark, Almighty God is compared to a farmer who sows his crop and lets it ripen without further attention. The insinuation is that, under the new covenant as under the old, God will appear to be taking no notice, will let evil and injustice flourish till a reckoning is held at the last day. But it is difficult to believe that Mark thus deliberately shortened a parable he found in Matthew; still more difficult to believe that Matthew added so much of circumstance, on his own authority, to a parable he found in Mark. More probably the two parables were both uttered by our Lord, though perhaps on different occasions, and the bearing of them was so evidently the same that you included one or the other, not both.

For verses 30-32 see notes on Matthew 13.31-33. Mark gives the Parable of the Mustard-seed, but not that of the Leaven, though both occur together in Luke (13.18-21). The verbal resemblance between Matthew and Luke is so close in this particular verse as to suggest the possibility of an insertion by copyists. Was Matthew 13.33 introduced into the text by the translator, or even by some subsequent editor, by way of preserving the tradition found in Luke? On the whole, Luke is the Gospel of womanhood; Matthew has not given us the story of the lost drachma (18.12; cp. Luke 15.8). If the Parable of the Leaven



stood in the original text of Matthew, and Mark had Matthew in front of him, its omission here is certainly surprising. But it may have been due to mere inadvertence; where there is a similarity of rubrics in two successive paragraphs, as in Matthew 13.31 and 33, the eye is apt to pass over the second and take it as read.

4.35-5.20. *The storm on the Lake, and the exorcism at Gerasa.* See notes on Matthew 8.23-34. A special feature in Mark's account of the storm is the form of our Lord's question, "Have you *still* no faith?" This would perhaps have been out of place in Matthew's narrative, where the incident (for whatever reason) is placed at the very beginning of our Lord's ministry. Mark alone has quoted the actual words used in the calming of the sea, "Peace, be still" (literally, "Silence, be muzzled"). The story of the demoniac is given in much greater detail both by Mark and by Luke. The most interesting addition they have to make is that of the name "Legion". The Gospels do not distinguish between the personality of the energumen and that of the evil spirit which is troubling him; cf. verses 6-8. This is probably responsible for the confusing variation between singular and plural in verses 10-12; in verse 10 "he", the demoniac, makes a request which "they", the devils, repeat in verse 12. The word "Legion", which would properly apply to five or six thousand men, should perhaps be interpreted as a boastful exaggeration.

5.21-43. *Jairus' daughter, and the issue of blood.* See notes on Matthew 9.18-26. Here, as in the last section, Mark and Luke are both much fuller in their treatment than Matthew. So many details are omitted in Matthew's account, e.g. the name of the father, and the selection of three Apostles as our Lord's companions, that it is difficult to believe he was simply cutting the story short. More probably, he represents the common tradition, which Mark has enriched from some private record. Verse 30 is evidently of special interest. Our Lord is not often represented in the Gospels as asking a question, and when he does so, it is usually a magisterial or a conversational question, not really designed to elicit information which is beyond the reach of the questioner. Magisterial questions are meant to arouse searchings of heart

in the person addressed; cf. Matthew 22.20, Luke 10.26. Conversational questions are a means of supplying information to the bystanders; cf. Mark 9.20 (where the case-history does not facilitate diagnosis, but lends impressiveness to the miracle). Mark is, perhaps, more inclined to record questions on our Lord's part which seem to indicate a desire for fresh knowledge, e.g. 6.38; but he is not the only Evangelist who does so, cf. Matthew 15.34, John 11.34. In the present instance, the suggestion of defective knowledge is very strong. Our Lord (it would appear) has an inward consciousness which assures him that *somebody* has been healed, without disclosing to him the identity or the whereabouts of the person concerned.

It is clear from many passages that our Lord could, as and when he chose, read men's minds instead of demanding an explanation in words; cf. especially John 16.30. But we have no right to assume that he ordinarily did so; nor, in the nature of things, can we form any idea of the psychological nexus between the supernatural knowledge with which he was endowed, and the experimental knowledge which he acquired after the common fashion of men. In the present instance, it is perhaps best to conclude, (i) that the fact of the cure was made known to him by a mere feeling, which gave him no further information, (ii) that he could thereupon, if he had so wished, have identified the *miraculée* in the crowd, but preferred not to, (iii) that his purpose in falling back upon experimental knowledge was to give the woman an opportunity of coming forward, of her own accord, to bear witness of the cure.

The pathetic embassy of Jairus' friends, warning him that it is too late, does not appear in Matthew, whose foreshortened account represents things as (humanly speaking) hopeless from the first. "Thou hast only to believe" is in line with (e.g.) Matthew 9.28, Mark 9.22. Such passages suggest that, by Divine appointment, faith was sometimes—perhaps normally—the condition of benefiting by the miraculous powers which our Lord exercised.

6.1-6. *The rejection at Nazareth.* See notes on Matthew 13.53-58. Mark (like Matthew) describes the reactions of the Nazarenes without attempting to explain the psychology which could be so impressed by

our Lord's miracles, and yet reject his claims. Indeed, at the end of verse 2 Mark seems to emphasize the inconsistency by the elaborate formula he uses; there is no suggestion that the Nazarenes depreciated the wisdom of our Lord's utterances, or discredited his miracles. Mark's use of "the carpenter" instead of "the carpenter's son" is quite possibly a correction of the phrase actually used, which ignored the fact of the Virgin Birth. This is the only reference in Scripture to the tradition that our Lord was apprenticed to St. Joseph's calling.

Verse 5 introduces a difficulty by telling us that our Lord "was not able" to do any wonderful works there; it is difficult to bring out the force of the Greek without translating "he had not the power to do any powerful works there". It is true that the verb is sometimes used to express unwillingness, rather than physical inability; "I am unable" to do a thing sometimes means "I cannot bring myself" to do a thing. But in the context the suggestion seems to be that the conditions for doing a miracle were not present. It has been pointed out above (notes to Mark 5.21-43) that, by Divine appointment, faith could sometimes be demanded of the petitioner as a necessary condition of receiving a miraculous favour. The situation at Nazareth would thus involve a wholesale inappropriateness which amounted, for practical purposes, to a physical impossibility; cf. "Can the men of the bridegroom's company fast?" in 2.19 above. Our Lord could not under the terms of his commission do miracles in such an atmosphere.

6.7-13. *Mission of the Twelve.* See notes on Matthew 10.1-15. It is not clear how we are to relate the present passage with Mark 3.13-19. At first sight, we might suppose that Matthew has given us a composite picture of two events, the choosing of the Apostles and their actual mission; Luke seems to follow Mark in making the distinction (see Luke 6.12-16, 9.1-6). But it is a curious circumstance that in Mark (not in Luke) our Lord is represented as giving the Apostles the power of exorcism twice over (3.15, 6.7), and it seems possible that Mark has given us two versions of the same story, one (in ch. 3) traceable to a private source, and another (the present passage) derived from Matthew or from a source used by Matthew. The permission in verse 8 of staff and sandals, apparently forbidden in Matthew's version, can hardly

be interpreted as meaning that when Mark wrote the Apostolic tradition had already been relaxed. Matthew's version probably forbids the Apostle to "have in his possession" a favourite staff (as opposed to "taking up for the journey" some stick from the hedge-row), and forbids him to have a second pair of sandals with him, taking it for granted that he is wearing one pair already. Matthew gives no description of what the Apostles actually did; the anointing of verse 13 is not mentioned in Luke, and James 5.14 is the only other Scriptural reference to the use of oil in Christian ceremonies.

6.14-29. *Death of St. John the Baptist.* See notes on Matthew 14.1-12. Mark's version of the story—surprisingly, since we can hardly imagine that it came direct from an eye-witness—is one of the fullest and most graphic pieces of narration in the Gospels. "Followed his advice in many things" in verse 20 depends on an inferior reading in the Greek; the true sense is probably "was much perplexed at what he heard from him". A more serious manuscript difficulty occurs in verse 22, where many good manuscripts read "his daughter Herodias" instead of "Herodias' own daughter". Evidently on merely critical grounds the former reading is more likely to be the original one; there would be every temptation to alter it, if only so as to ensure that Mark agreed with Matthew. But in fact the dancer's name was Salome, not Herodias, and she was not Herod's daughter, but his niece. If the reading represented by the Latin text is wrong, we may perhaps suppose that "daughter" is used loosely for "step-daughter", and that Herodias (like Herod) was a title sometimes given to any descendant of the princely house.

While the description of St. John's death is so lucid, the rubric which introduces the story (verses 14-16) does not connect it in any way either with what precedes or with what follows. Verse 15 is frankly superfluous, being a duplicate of 8.28 below, and makes it necessary to repeat Herod's guess in a rather unconvincing way. It is not the first time that Mark has given signs of a difficulty in digesting his materials. "A prophet like one of the old prophets" (literally, "a prophet like one of the prophets") is curious; Luke represents the people in question as saying "that one of the old prophets had returned to life" (Luke 9.8);



and it is this quite different guess which is reported by the Apostles at Caesarea Philippi, even on Mark's own shewing (see 8.28 below). It is possible that there has been some dislocation in the text of the present passage.

6.30-56. *The Five Thousand; our Lord walks on the water.* Once more, Mark is full of detail. Like John (6.7) he knows exactly what would have been the expense of buying bread for the crowd; he describes the crowd as sitting down "drinking-parties drinking-parties" or alternatively "garden-beds garden-beds" by sections of fifty or a hundred; he tells us about sick men lying on their pallets, out in the market-place, when our Lord was expected to visit some village or town. The only serious difference between Matthew and Mark lies in the rubric with which the story begins. In Matthew 14.12 and 13, John is buried by his disciples, and those disciples come and tell our Lord what has happened; our Lord, on hearing the news, withdraws to the other side of the Lake; can it be only an accident that, in doing so, he leaves the territory of John's murderer, and takes refuge in the territory of Herodias' injured husband? All trace of this disappears in Mark. John is buried by his disciples, and then *our Lord's* disciples come and tell our Lord what has happened (the same verb as in Matthew) *in the course of their preaching tour*. They need rest, and our Lord, in an attempt to secure solitude, withdraws across the Lake. There is no causal nexus between John's death and our Lord's movements at all.

On the assumption that Mark wrote first, and Matthew made use of his record, the following picture suggests itself. Matthew wrongly supposed that our Lord's retirement across the Lake followed immediately on the death of John, whereas Mark had said nothing of the kind—the comment in verse 14 may have been made weeks, perhaps months, after the actual murder. On this wrong supposition, Matthew proceeded to insinuate, without actually asserting, that the two incidents were related as cause and effect. But this would imply (i) that Matthew was very obtuse in his reading of his sources, and (ii) that he allowed himself considerable liberties in his interpretation of them, since he neglects Mark 6.30 and 31 altogether.

On the assumption that Matthew wrote first, and that Mark made use of his record (whether in Aramaic or in Greek), the whole situation becomes much clearer. Mark saw that Matthew's language might give rise to a quite unwarrantable suspicion; namely that our Lord fled across the Lake so as to escape from the jurisdiction of the persecutor. He also knew that the retirement in question happened immediately after the return of the Twelve from their mission (unrecorded in Matthew). Consequently, he stressed what he knew to have been the real reason for our Lord's decision, viz. the desire to avoid publicity; meanwhile, he omitted the indication of date in Matthew 14.13, "Jesus, when he had heard it", and left the whole story of John's death hanging in the air, without relevance to its context.

Did Matthew really mean to suggest that our Lord withdrew in order to avoid persecution? Probably not; it is evident from Matthew 14.22 that the retirement only occupied a few days at the most—indeed, Matthew 14.15 suggests that it only occupied a single day. It is more likely that Herod, hearing about our Lord's miracles immediately after John's death, sent a deputation to enquire into the claims of the new prophet; our Lord managed to avoid this new threat of publicity by a few days' or even by a day's absence. This moment was evidently the peak of our Lord's worldly popularity; John tells us that some of his followers were ready to make a king of him (see notes on John 6.15).

The mention of Bethsaida in verse 45 creates a difficulty. Luke (9.10) tells us that the miracle of the loaves happened at or near the city called Bethsaida; evidently meaning the well-known Bethsaida Julias, which stood at the north-east of the Lake, just outside Galilee. How can the Apostles, on their return journey, have made for Bethsaida? It has been suggested that they only meant to cross the bay which adjoins the city, and were forced by contrary winds out to sea, eventually finding it easiest to make for Capharnaum (cf. John 6.17) on the western shore. But "to go across" in the Gospels regularly means crossing the Lake of Galilee from shore to shore, and it has been widely held that there must have been a different Bethsaida, somewhere in the Capharnaum neighbourhood, to which Mark is here alluding. This would agree with a tradition which goes back to the eighth century; moreover, Andrew

and Peter lived at "Bethsaida" (John 1.44), and our Lord mentions it (Matthew 11.21) among the cities where his great miracles were performed—we do not expect such a city to lie outside Jewish soil. Be this as it may, the contrasted statements of Mark and Luke are sufficiently curious, especially if we suppose that Luke had access to Mark's record. It seems just possible that there was a very early error in the transmission of the text; e.g., Mark may have written "To take ship and go across to the other side, before him, leaving him to send the multitude home to Bethsaida".

"Made as if to pass them by" in verse 48 is literally "had the intention of passing them by"; but translators have rightly seen that the story is being told, not from our Lord's point of view, but from that of his disciples in the boat; we are concerned, therefore, not with the internal processes of his mind, but with what he looked as if he were going to do, the way he was heading. This does not imply any insincerity in our Lord's behaviour (cf. note on Luke 24.28).

7.1-23. *On external religion.* See notes on Matthew 15.1-20. Mark is here unusually diffuse; he adds little to Matthew except for the footnote about Jewish customs in verses 3 and 4. "Again and again" in verse 3 perhaps follows a false reading in the Greek, where the best manuscripts have the obscure phrase "with the fist". In verse 17 the strange construction "asked him the parable" is repeated from 4.10 above. The list of sins in verse 21 is longer than Matthew's, but the additional items are chiefly internal sins, which emphasize our Lord's point less closely.

7.24-37. *The Syrophenician woman; the deaf and dumb man.* See notes on Matthew 15.21-28. The story of the Syrophenician woman is told (apart from the dialogue) in quite different words by the two Evangelists; perhaps Mark depended on a separate Aramaic source (the Greek phrase used in verse 25, "whose daughter of her had an unclean spirit", is an over-literal translation from his original). Verses 31-37 are peculiar to Mark. The geographical indications in verse 31 are hopelessly puzzling. Our Lord must have gone a whole day's

journey or more out of his way, if he took in Sidon on his route from Tyre to the sea of Galilee; moreover, the end of the verse would naturally be understood as meaning that he came to the sea of Galilee "through the midst" of Decapolis, although Decapolis lay south-east of the Lake, and he was coming from the north-west. The text of the passage is not absolutely certain, and may have suffered from corruption; or it may be an abridgement of some more detailed description, given in Mark's sources, which would have made the journey more intelligible.

There is a curious resemblance in atmosphere between this miracle and the healing of the blind man in 8.22-26 below. They are the only two stories of miracle peculiar to Mark; in both, our Lord takes the sufferer aside, away from the crowd; in both he effects the cure by a gradual process in which he "shews his working", instead of dismissing the *miraculé* with a word, as he so often does elsewhere. We might be tempted to suppose that we are here in touch with an earlier and more authentic stream of tradition; that all our Lord's miracles were in fact accompanied by outward demonstrations of this kind, but it became the fashion to ignore and obscure them. The calculation is a false one; in the latest Gospel of all you find the same traits emphasized, cf. John 9.6; you get the same reference to "sighing", cf. John 11.33 and 38. It is clear that our Lord chose, on certain occasions, to "slow down" the process of miraculous healing which normally appeared (at least to human eyes) instantaneous.

What his motive was, the Gospels do not help us to determine. We may perhaps conjecture that he meant to prepare the minds of his disciples for the Sacramental idea. They were to see that external actions might have more than a symbolic significance; that the Spirit, who blows where he will, does nevertheless, as a rule, bestow his gifts by orderly stages. There is a further doubt, here as elsewhere, about the demand for secrecy; why must a strict charge be laid upon the deaf man's friends, not to speak of it to anyone? Why must the blind man, in 8.26, be cautioned against the gossip of the village? Not merely because they lived in Gentile districts, which were not to be evangelized as yet; the demoniac in 5.19 above is told to spread the news among his



friends; yet he, too, was living in Decapolis. We can only suppose that the special circumstances of each case made publicity now desirable, now an embarrassment.

It does not appear that the dumb man was altogether incapable of utterance; no doubt he could mouth out syllables after a fashion. Hence in verse 35 we are told, not that he talked, but that he talked plainly, that is, intelligibly. The double effect of the miracle probably recalled to men's minds (verse 37) the prophecy made in *Isaia*s 35:5 and 6.

8.1-21. *Miracle of the Four Thousand; on trust in Providence.* See notes on Matthew 15.29-39 and 16.1-12. "At this time" (literally, "in those days") is a form of words familiar to us from the liturgy, but its occurrence in the Gospels is rare; it is only used twice to designate points of time in our Lord's ministry, here and in Luke 6.12. Perhaps Mark means us to realize that there was a considerable lapse of time between the miracle of the Five Thousand and the closing scenes of our Lord's ministry, which begin at this point. Actually we know from John (6.4, 7.2, 11.55) that a full year elapsed between the Miracle of the Five Thousand and the Passion. "Once more" is probably emphatic here. Elsewhere, Mark uses "again" in the vague sense of "on another occasion", when a fresh incident is to be introduced; cf. 2.1 and 13, 3.1 above. But here he has already introduced the fresh incident with the words "at this time"; probably, therefore, he is drawing attention to the fact that a second miracle of the loaves is to be expected. The correspondence of language between Matthew and Mark in describing this miracle is unusually close.

The geography of the whole passage needs some attention. Presumably the Four Thousand, like the Five Thousand, were fed on the eastern side of the Lake, since they were in a desert place; cf. the indications of Matthew 15.29. Mark's Dalmanutha, like Matthew's Magadan, is unknown; but some place on the west of the Lake seems to be meant. If the whole story is to be read continuously (but see notes on Matthew), it was on the west side of the Lake, as we should expect, that the travellers were met by a deputation from the Pharisees, and

our Lord, for whatever reason, crossed at once to the eastern shore again. It was here that the scantiness of their provisions might well prove an embarrassment.

Why does Mark describe the deputation as if it consisted only of Pharisees, whereas Matthew notes also the presence of the Sadducees, with their rival theological views? The combination is so unusual, that Matthew is not likely to have invented it; in another context, it is the "scribes and Pharisees" who are represented as asking for a sign (Matthew 12.38). More probably, then, Mark omitted the Sadducees because he thought his Gentile readers would not be interested in these distinctions. On the other hand, in verse 15 "the leaven of Herod" is likely to be authentic (see notes on Matthew 16). What exactly our Lord meant by "leaven" must be a matter of conjecture; it is only a fragment of his conversation that has here been preserved for us, and its true context cannot safely be inferred either from verse 12 above or from verse 18 below. The word "doctrine" used in Matthew 16.12 should be taken in a very general sense where Herod comes into the picture. It seems reasonable to guess that an atmosphere of worldliness and self-seeking is what our Lord denounces.

8.22-26. *The blind man at Bethsaida.* Peculiar to Mark; cf. comments on Mark 7.31-37. Bethsaida Julias, by the northern shore of the Lake, is no doubt the town meant in verse 22; it lay on the way to Caesarea Philippi (verse 27). The blind man will have been brought in by his friends from one of the villages round. The expression he uses in verse 24 is obviously authentic, if only because it is so obscure. He does not say "I cannot tell the difference between men and trees"; he says "I see men walking like trees". According to the common usages of human speech, this ought to mean "I see men walking about looking as tall as trees". Either from some trick of his imperfectly restored vision, or because he had been blind so long that he expected men to be the size of children, he saw nothing but enormous shadows round him at first. What our Lord evidently said in verse 26 was "Do not tell anybody into the village", a reading still preserved by some manuscripts. But for the most part the pregnant construction of the Greek defeated the copyists,

who either corrected the phrase to "Do not go into the village" (what village?), or paraphrased it in the form "If thou goest into the village, do not tell anyone".

8.27-39. *The Confession of St. Peter; the Passion foretold; a call to renunciation.* See notes on Matthew 16.13-28. Does verse 31, with its prediction of our Lord's death, follow closely on the scene at Caesarea Philippi? The assumption is generally made; Luke's account seems to indicate that it is right (Luke 9.21,22), whereas Matthew's "from then onwards" if anything suggests a time-lag. Mark gives us no indication in verse 31, but his rubric in verse 34 makes it very difficult to believe that we are still at Caesarea Philippi, a dozen miles beyond the frontier of Jewish civilization; how could there be a "multitude" there ready to be indoctrinated with the severest principles of Christian asceticism? Quite possibly (in spite of Matthew 16.24) the whole of the ascetical passage belongs to a different context. In that case 9.1 will follow immediately on 8.33, and it will be natural to identify Hermon, immediately to the north, as the mountain of the Transfiguration. But there may be a concealed break in the narrative (between verses 30 and 31) which would bring us back to Galilee.

"After three days" in verse 31 is probably the actual phrase our Lord used; Matthew and Luke correctly interpret it as meaning "after parts of three days", that is, in modern parlance, "on the next day but one". "Reproached" in verse 32 and "rebuked" in verse 33 are the same word in the original, and this has sometimes been regarded as a calculated effect. But Mark's vocabulary is limited, and the repetition may well have been accidental; the verb has already been used in verse 30. In verse 35, as in 10.29 below, the words "and for the sake of the gospel" appear in Mark but not in Matthew. Probably Mark is restoring, from private sources, the full form of the utterance, which the common tradition had abbreviated.

9.1-12. *The Transfiguration; conversation on the mountain-side.* See notes on Matthew 17.1-13. Mark's account varies little from Matthew's; rather unexpectedly, he does not record the effect of terror produced by the cloud and the voice from heaven, though the reference to "look-

ing round them" in verse 7 suggests that they kept their eyes shut during part of the experience. There is also a close verbal resemblance between Matthew and Mark when they record the conversation held during the descent of the mountain. The only considerable difference comes in verse 11, where it is impossible to avoid the suspicion that our text is wrong. Commonly, critics suggest that the second part of the verse should be read as part of the Apostles' question: "Why do the Pharisees and scribes say Elias must come before Christ? And why is it written of the Son of Man that he must be much ill-used and despised?" But in that case our Lord's reply would be a very partial one. It would be more attractive to read: "And they asked him, Tell us, why do the Pharisees and scribes say that Elias must come before Christ? He answered them, Elias must needs come and restore all things as they were. But I tell you that Elias has already come, and they have misused him at their pleasure, as the scriptures tell of him. And now, what do the scriptures say of the Son of Man? That he must be much ill-used and despised". This not only gives a perfect sense to the passage, but makes it correspond admirably with Matthew. If we leave the text as it stands, "what?" as opposed to "why?" still seems necessitated by the logic of the sentence. To make our Lord ask, "Why is it written of the Son of Man that he must be much ill-used and despised?" is to break up the sense unnecessarily.

Our Lord does not in so many words clear up the difficulty which underlay the Apostles' question. They wanted to know how the picture of a Jewry converted by a new Elias could be reconciled with the picture of a Jewry prepared to crucify the Christ. He tells them, in effect, that Elias has come, but his mission has been a failure. Since Malachy (4.6) appears to predict a *successful* mission of Elias, it has always been the instinct of the Church that a second coming of the prophet is to be expected shortly before the general judgement, and that the Jewish people, this time converted, will at last achieve its appointed destiny.

9.14-32. *Healing of the lunatic boy, and fresh prophecy of the Passion.* See notes on Matthew 17.14-22. Mark's account here is as full and graphic as is his account of John the Baptist's death (see above, 6.14-29).



Our Lord's demand of faith on the part of the suppliant is emphasized here, as in 5.36 (see notes there). In verses 23 and 24 there are manuscript variations which suggest an early obscuration of the text, but they are of no importance to the story.

In verse 29 there is a much more serious discrepancy; some of the best manuscripts include, some of the best manuscripts reject, the words "and fasting". If we turn back to Matthew, we find no manuscript which omits the words "and fasting", but there is some evidence against the genuineness of the whole verse. Nor can this passage be studied in isolation, since there are two other passages in the New Testament where the reference to fasting involves a disputed reading. In Acts 10.30 Cornelius, according to some manuscripts, was "fasting and making his afternoon prayer", and in I Cor. 7.5 a less imposing collection of authorities represents St. Paul as recommending abstinence from the use of marriage when his converts want to have "more freedom for fasting and prayer". In both these cases, the Vulgate text gives us the shorter version, and neither would have attracted much attention if it had not been for the precisely similar conflict of evidence in the present passage.

It can hardly be doubted that there has been, at some very early date, a systematic interference with the sacred text. Was it the influence of some Encratite sect, which was determined to ensure, even by forgery, a greater prominence for fasting in the New Testament? Or did some opponent of the same tendency delete, no less reprehensibly, a series of allusions which seemed to put fasting too much in the limelight? Three reasons may be adduced for suggesting that an omission in the text is, on the whole, more likely than an insertion.

(i) The evidence for an omission is strong in the Gospel passage, slight in the Acts and in the epistle. That is what we should expect. In the earliest times, many copies of the Gospels must have been in circulation; many people must have known the Gospels almost by heart. If some designing person mutilated the sacred text, there would be every chance that the fraud would be discovered by means of cross-reference. Whereas in the Acts or in the epistles the omission of a single word might easily pass unnoticed. (Contrariwise, if a fraudulent

*insertion* had been made it would have passed muster in the Apostolic writings more easily than in Mark.)

(ii) Be the manuscript evidence what it may, antecedent probabilities must count. What is our Lord likely to have said, in discussing the difficulties of this particular exorcism? "There is no way of casting out such spirits as this, except by prayer" is a sentence curiously devoid of rhetoric. Had the Apostles, then, not prayed at all? Are there some evil spirits so easily expelled, that prayer is unnecessary? Obviously what our Lord means is that there are some spirits too powerful to deal with by ordinary rule of thumb; you must have recourse to heroic measures. "Prayer" does not suggest heroic measures; "prayer and fasting" does, if you take it for a proverbial phrase, like "might and main", "tooth and nail", etc. (In Acts 10, it is perfectly natural that a Gentile proselyte in spiritual difficulties should have been fasting, though he need not necessarily have done so. In I Cor. 7 it is at least arguable that the mention of fasting improves the sense of the passage.)

(iii) If, with the majority of critics, we cut out Matthew 17.20 (17.21 in the Greek text) as a copyist's insertion, derived from Mark, then that insertion must have been made very early indeed. It is much the oldest criterion we have for determining the true state of the text in Mark. And the manuscripts which give Matthew 17.20 at all give it in the full form, "prayer and fasting".

At the same time, it may be questioned whether Matthew 17.20 itself has not suffered from tendentious correction, like Mark, Acts and Corinthians. The two principal manuscripts which omit "and fasting" in Mark 9 omit the whole of Matthew 17.20. It is difficult to believe that an interpolator would not be content with falsifying the text of Mark; tampering with Matthew as well would invite detection. Whereas a copyist anxious to obscure the notion of fasting might well strike out the whole sentence in Matthew 17, where the sense is complete without it, and the obnoxious word in Mark 9, where the omission of the sentence would have left an obvious gap.

It remains true that, in view of these textual variations, we cannot quote the words "prayer and fasting" as indisputably our Lord's own words.

In the Greek of verse 30 "he was teaching his disciples" is the reason given for our Lord's desire to pass through Galilee incognito; there may have been other reasons, but we know nothing about them. The bewilderment of the Apostles in verse 31 may have been caused by his reference to the Resurrection (cf. verse 9 above). But Luke (9.44) represents him as having only prophesied his approaching death, and the Apostles are nevertheless bewildered. It was very difficult, apparently, to wean them away from false expectations of a Messianic kingdom ushered in, all at once, by a visible triumph of their Master; cf. notes on Luke 24.21, Acts 1.6.

9.33-50. *Various sayings.* See notes on Matthew 18.1-14. All three Synoptic Gospels record the same dispute about precedency as happening on the way up to Jerusalem, apparently soon after the Transfiguration. There is a curious difference of rubric between them. Matthew, who has just told the story of the Temple tribute, represents the Apostles as referring the question to our Lord of their own accord, and it seems to arise out of that incident. Mark and Luke represent it as a private discussion among the Apostles themselves, of which our Lord was (miraculously) aware. It is not likely that Matthew would have left this unmentioned, if he had had Mark's account at his disposal; Matthew seems to have followed a vague common tradition which Mark corrected from private information. What did our Lord actually say when he took the child in his arms? Probably the answer to this is to be found in Matthew 18.4, "He is greatest in the kingdom of heaven who will abase himself like this little child". Meanwhile, all the three Evangelists give us a mosaic of collected sayings, some of which refer to childhood; but for the most part they do not seem to belong to this context, and several of them are duplicated elsewhere. Verse 36 here, for example, is not (as we should expect) a rebuke to ambition, and the second half of it is assigned by Matthew to a quite different occasion (10.40).

Verses 37 and 38 do not occur in Matthew at all. The second part of our Lord's comment, "the man who is not against you is on your side" is intelligible enough. "No one who does a miracle in my name will lightly speak evil of me" is more difficult, and perhaps that is why

Luke (9.50) has omitted it. Our Lord is so urgent elsewhere about the duty of following him; could a stray imitator of his really perform miracles? Or, if he did so, could the case be anything but a rare exception? And our Lord does not seem to treat it so here. We are reminded of Sceva's sons in Acts 19.13, where the same kind of presumption is severely punished. Perhaps we ought to allow for a certain degree of irony in our Lord's comment. "If he is successful in his exorcism, at least we shall not find a very embittered opponent there". By Greek grammatical usage, "casting out devils" may mean no more than "trying to cast out devils"; cf. Matthew 3.14, "John prevented him", Luke 1.59, "they called him Zachary". There is no real contrast with Matthew 12.30. Anybody who does not hinder the spread of the Gospel is, from the Christian point of view, a kind of ally; it does not follow that patronizing the Gospel without believing it will do a man any good in eternity. All the same (verse 40) we must not attempt to limit the scope of the Divine mercy.

Like Matthew (who has already recorded it elsewhere) Mark tacks on here the well-known charter of asceticism (verses 43-48; cf. notes on Matthew 5.29) for no better reason, it may be, than that "scandal" has just been mentioned. Does verse 49 follow any more closely on verse 48? The assumption is usually made, though it is doubtful whether the word "For" can be pressed in such cases. If there is a real connexion, we have to decide between two interpretations: (i) that every human life must, sooner or later, be seasoned with the tang of suffering ("fire"), through mortification here or through punishment hereafter; and (ii) that the punishments of a future life are eternal, because the fire of hell has the unexpected effect of "seasoning" (in the sense of "preserving") its victims. The metaphor involved in (ii) becomes less *outré* when we remember that Tarichaea, on the Lake of Galilee, was a well-known centre of the fish-curing industry. But there is something suspiciously elaborate about this interplay between two quite disparate metaphors, and it is doubtful whether we have not lost the clue to verse 49, either from ignorance of its true context or through some fault in the manuscripts. Some of these omit the second half of the verse, which is in any case a quotation from Lev. 2.13.

Verse 50 begins with a saying which belongs more naturally to the



context of Matthew 5.13, or to that of Luke 14.34. The mention of salt perhaps accounts for Mark's inclusion of it here. Salt is naturally interpreted as the symbol of apostolic zeal; which makes the second half of the verse faintly difficult. Perhaps a contrast is implied, "Be zealous for the honour of God, but contrive, nevertheless, to keep peace with one another". The warning is so general, and so constantly needed among Christian people, that we need not connect it particularly with the situation mentioned in verse 34.

10.1-12. *On marriage and divorce.* Cf. notes on Matthew 19.1-12. The manuscripts have three different readings in verse 1, "came into the territory of Judaea beyond the Jordan", "came into the territory of Judaea and beyond the Jordan", "came into the territory of Judaea by way of Transjordan". The first of these agrees with Matthew, and may have been introduced by a copyist for that purpose. If Mark wrote "into the territory of Judaea and beyond the Jordan", he was perhaps deliberately correcting the tradition which Matthew followed, since Palestine beyond Jordan was not, in our Lord's time, politically part of Judaea. (Matthew's phrase is intelligible, since the Jordan was not a political boundary before 4 B.C. or after A.D. 40.) "By way of Transjordan" may be merely a guess; it is probable that our Lord came straight from Galilee into Judaea by way of Samaria (cf. Luke 9.52). It seems clear that in the last months of his life he divided his time between Judaea and Transjordan; cf. John 10.40 and 11.54. If Mark is really telling us that crowds gathered round our Lord in Judaea itself, this is the first reference to such an event in the Synoptic Gospels.

The verbal resemblances between Matthew and Mark are very strong in this passage. It is the more remarkable, that the crucial verses 10-12 differ from Matthew in three respects. (i) The saving clause "not for any unfaithfulness of hers" has disappeared; (ii) instead of "He, too, commits adultery who marries her after she has been put away" we have "And if a woman puts away her husband and marries another, she is an adulteress"; (iii) the directive about divorce was given, according to Mark, not to the Pharisees but to the Apostles privately.

For the difficulties raised under heading (i), see notes on Matthew. Verse 12 introduces a fresh problem, peculiar to Mark. In the ancient

civilizations generally, divorce was a right granted only to the husband; and although in his day Gentile wives had secured something like equality of treatment, it is strange that our Lord should mention, as if it were a matter of common occurrence, a procedure which the Jewish law did not contemplate. Some manuscripts, indeed, have "if she puts away her husband", as if the discarded wife already mentioned in verse 11 were referred to. But this would be both ambiguous and inaccurate; why should not our Lord have said "and if she who has been put away marries another"? It seems clear that Gentile divorce is in question. Either the Apostles, perhaps reflecting on the career of Herodias, put a new question which was a merely academic question in Jewish eyes; or else Mark, for the benefit of his Gentile readers, put in a foot-note of his own explaining what was, clearly enough, our Lord's mind about the bilateral obligation of matrimony (cf. I Cor. 7.10).

Matthew, it would seem, following the common tradition, has lumped together as part of our Lord's answer to the Pharisees two distinct utterances. Mark, with more definite information, is able to tell us that the explicit directive was only issued to the Apostles in private.

It is perhaps worth observing that a different translation of verse 12 is possible; viz. "And if a woman puts away her husband and marries another, he (the second husband) is an adulterer". This rendering would bring Mark into closer line with Matthew, but it seems less natural.

10.13-31. *On admission to the kingdom of heaven; the rich young man; the heavenly reward.* See notes on Matthew 19.13-30. Mark describes the blessing of the children and the interview with the rich young man very much as Matthew does, with slightly more accumulation of detail which helps us (as usual) to see our Lord in his full humanity. He is indignant with the Apostles when they try to keep the children away from him; he looks at the young man, and conceives a love for him. There is a curious conflict of evidence about the true reading of verse 24. Some of the best manuscripts omit the words "for those who trust in riches". On the whole, it seems most likely that the additional words are a foot-note which has crept into the text; our Lord does not usually explain away his hard sayings. In verse 30, "a thousand-

fold" surely means a thousand times their worth, not a thousand times their number. It is possible to speak of the Christian, by a metaphor, as belonging to an enormous family; but if we adopt that explanation here, it is difficult to see where the houses and lands come in. It seems better to understand the whole phrase as referring to the pride and joy which our Christian heritage ought to be to us; cf. II Cor. 6.10. "This world" and "the world to come" are strictly "this time" and "the eternity to come"; but you cannot indicate the contrast in an English translation without overstressing it.

10.32-52. *The Passion again; request of the sons of Zebedee; Bartimaeus.* See notes on Matthew 20.17-34. In verse 32 the Vulgate adopts what is probably an inferior reading; the best Greek manuscripts imply that "they", the Twelve Apostles, were bewildered, or perhaps awe-stricken, "and those who followed were frightened"—presumably by something in our Lord's demeanour which seemed a presage of calamity. Our Lord was now on his way up to the feast; the crowd who followed him were no doubt pilgrims, either from Transjordan (John 10.42) or more probably from Galilee. He brought the Apostles to his side (cf. Matthew 20.17) so as to address them in private, apart from his other followers.

The mention of a "baptism" in verse 38 has no parallel in Matthew; a similar phrase occurs in Luke 12.50. We are so accustomed to hearing about "the baptism of blood" that we forget it is an ecclesiastical term, unfamiliar to our Lord's audience. Are we then to suppose that Mark—or even some very early copyist—inserted the words, which were no part of our Lord's authentic utterance? To get rid of this implication, some commentators have suggested that we should understand "baptizing" here in a wholly non-technical sense. A "cup" is often a symbol of misfortune in the Old Testament (e.g., Is. 51.17); so, too, by a natural metaphor, a man in distress will describe himself as drowned under a flood (e.g., Ps. 68.2). Our Lord, then, simply asks the two Apostles whether they are prepared to drink the same bitter medicine, to be plunged in the same engulfing waters, as himself. But if "baptized" has sometimes the meaning of "engulfed", is the word "baptism" ever so used? And was it possible for the contemporaries of our Lord's

Fore-runner to hear the word "baptism" used without being reminded of the scenes so recently enacted on the banks of Jordan? It seems more natural to suppose that the question meant, and was understood as meaning, "Are you prepared to be initiated (into the mysteries of the kingdom) with the same terrible initiation which I am to undergo?" Persecution is clearly indicated, but not necessarily martyrdom.

Beyond the name, Mark adds nothing to the story of Bartimaeus except verse 49. Why that very simple verse should be so full of comfort, it is difficult to say; but it is one of those Scriptural texts which are hallowed for numerous Christians by memories of spiritual conflict; they have been reassured, in some dark moment, by the picture of a blind man feeling his way towards the sound of a voice.

II.1-11. *Our Lord rides into Jerusalem.* See notes on Matthew 21.1-11. In verse 1 the Vulgate text is probably right in omitting the mention of Bethphage. The great majority of manuscript authorities can be quoted in favour of "Bethphage and Bethany"; but Origen, early in the third century, was already discussing the omission, and there must have been a strong temptation for copyists to assimilate Mark to Luke (19.29). On the other hand, in verse 3 the authority of the leading manuscripts should be preferred, and we should render "Tell him, the Lord has need of it, and is sending it back here quite soon". It is commonly supposed that Matthew misunderstood his sources, and interpreted our Lord as meaning "the owner will let you have it without more ado". But did Matthew mean us to understand that? Matthew's Greek will just bear the same meaning as Mark's; and if Matthew wrote in Aramaic, the case for a misunderstanding between the two Evangelists is negligible.

Mark and Luke both tell us that the ass had never been ridden before, attaching, no doubt, a mystical significance to the fact (cf. Luke 23.53). It is very unlikely that Matthew would have omitted the circumstance, if it had been included in the sources he used.

II.12-26. *The barren fig-tree, and the cleansing of the Temple.* See notes on Matthew 21.12-22. Mark adds little to the story, except that he has apparently given us a more exact view about the order of



events. Verse 16 is peculiar to his account; the point is that the Temple precincts were used as a short cut by people on worldly errands, in spite of discouragement by the authorities. It is an important reminder that our Lord, though in some ways he had so little regard for outward appearances, did not approve of a casual approach towards holy things. Verse 21 is a rare instance of St. Peter's name being omitted by Matthew, and supplied by Mark. Was it, perhaps, so as to attach an authoritative *pinxit* to the rather different picture which the Marcan tradition had preserved? (See notes on Matthew.) In verse 22 the curious phrase "Have faith of God" is peculiar to Mark; it has no exact parallel in the New Testament, and suggests no Hebrew or Aramaic original.

Verses 25 and 26 look very much as if they had been tacked on to the utterance of our Lord that is preserved for us in Matthew. We have already alluded to the difficulty Mark sometimes has in disposing of his material, especially where isolated sayings are concerned. There may have been a collection of the Divine oracles roughly arranged under subjects; under the heading of "prayer" the need of faith and the need of forgiving our enemies may have been successively dealt with, as in verses 24-26. Mark, seeing that verse 24 was relevant to the subject in hand, wished at the same time to preserve the message of verses 25 and 26, but was at a loss to find a place for it. So he boldly put in all three verses, without much regard for sequence of thought. (Some manuscripts, evidently through a copyist's error, omit verse 26.) Matthew has either preserved the true context of the saying about forgiveness, or has devised a more appropriate setting for it (see Matthew 6.14).

11.27-12.12. *A question answered by a question; the Wicked Husbandmen.* See notes on Matthew 21.23-27 and 33-46. The first part of this section corresponds word for word with Matthew, except for a grammatical variant in verses 31 and 32, which some manuscripts have smoothed out. The chief differences in the second part have been discussed in the notes on Matthew. The detail of verse 5 is also peculiar to Mark; the third mission in Luke is only that of a single servant. Only in Mark is there a gradation of outrage, the second messenger being

perhaps stunned (the word does not occur elsewhere) instead of merely beaten, and the third killed outright; this almost looks like a refinement on the simpler tradition preserved by Matthew. Mark's wording in verse 7 raises more acutely than Matthew's the question why, in the story, the vine-dressers hoped to *inherit*—Matthew perhaps implies a forcible seizure. Presumably the word "inheritance" is used (after the Hebrew fashion) in a vague sense; nor was our Lord careful, it would seem, to build up the detail of his parables in an artistically convincing way, as long as it served to bring out his point in strong relief. The point here is, evidently, that the Jewish rulers were hoping, at that moment, to make their own position secure by eliminating the rival Teacher; and in the attempt, they were sealing the doom of their own nation.

A more complicated question is raised by the quotation in verses 10 and 11. In Matthew, if we reject 21.44 as an insertion, the appropriateness of it is clear enough. The owner of the vineyard will hand it over to a fresh lot of servants "who will pay him his due when the season comes". After all, it has been prophesied long ago that the stone which the builders rejected in the first instance will eventually become the chief stone of the building. That is why I am telling you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you, and given to a people which yields the revenues that belong to it . . . Evidently the "stone" here means the Gentiles, rejected under the Old Covenant, substituted for unfaithful Israel under the New. That is a possible way of interpreting Mark 12.10 and 11, but it must be admitted that Mark does not underline the emphasis as Matthew does. Luke goes further; he introduces the quotation without comment, as Mark does, and then adds the verse about those who fall on the stone and those on whom the stone falls, which is plainly inapplicable to the position of the redeemed Gentiles. However we explain Luke 20.18 in detail, it is clear that the stone must be identified as our Lord himself.

It looks as if Matthew had given us the authentic interpretation of our Lord's meaning, though possibly he may have dotted the I's and crossed the T's of it, for the sake of thick-witted readers. Mark leaves it to the reader to work out the interpretation for himself; possibly, here as elsewhere, he was careful to avoid aggravating the misunder-

standings between Jew and Gentile in the Roman Church. And the reader naturally imagines that the stone is our Lord; the more so, because we think of Mark as the disciple of St. Peter, and St. Peter, true to his nickname, does commonly identify the Stone of Ps. 117 with his Master (Acts 4.11, I Peter 2.7). Luke, assuming this interpretation, has imported into the passage a stray saying of our Lord, belonging to a different context, though it was a comment on the same verse of the Psalms.

12.13-37. *The day of riddles.* See notes on Matthew 22.15-46. The first two encounters, with the Pharisees and with the Sadducees, are very much as in Matthew; the words "at the burning bush" have been appended in verse 26 as a reference note, to shew where the quotation may be found (see Romans 11.2 for what is possibly a similar example of annotation). It is when the scribe comes on the scene, in verse 28, that Mark clearly begins to derive his information from an independent source. Not that there is contradiction; "to try him" in Matthew 22.35 need not imply any sinister intention; cf. John 6.6. Mark's omission of the words "after that day" (Matthew 22.46) is interesting. The words strike us as unnecessary, now that our Lord has only three days of mortal life left to him; and Mark may have felt the difficulty. Mark also records the silencing of our Lord's adversaries at the end of question-time, verse 34, instead of deferring it, less tidily, till verse 37.

12.38-44. *The Pharisees denounced; the widow's almsgiving.* Matthew gives us a whole chapter (23) on the text of verses 38-40, and omits the story of the widow altogether. Curiously, in his long chapter on the Pharisees there is no reference, as in Mark and Luke, to their "swallowing up the property of widows". It looks as if Mark depended, here, on a source different from Matthew's; possibly the connexion of the two passages is due to their subject, not to historical sequence. The traditional view that Mark wrote primarily for a Roman public seems reinforced by the fact that he gives here the Latin equivalent, "farthing", for the two "mites", which were Greek.

13.1-37. *Our Lord's great prophecy of judgement.* See notes on

Matthew 24. It can hardly be said that Mark's account differs from Matthew's at all except in certain omissions. The most striking of these is the description, in Matthew 24.3, of our Lord's terms of reference. In Mark (verse 4) the Apostles only ask him about the destruction of the Temple; they say nothing about his Second Coming, or the end of the world. On the supposition, made by many modern critics, that Mark wrote before, and Matthew after, the destruction of Jerusalem, this would be wholly inexplicable. It should be Matthew, not Mark, in that case, who would be concerned to delete all reference to a final world-catastrophe due to occur within the lifetime of our Lord's contemporaries. Actually, it is not difficult to believe that Mark has preserved the formula of the Apostles' question more accurately. Indeed, the fact that he mentions St. Peter's own name, with that of his three companions (verse 3; cp. Matthew 24.3), suggests that he may be giving his authority for correcting Matthew's account; cf. note on 11.21 above. But there can be little doubt that, if Matthew is interpreting the thought of our Lord's questioners, he is interpreting it correctly. Verses 5 to 7 of the present passage lose their force, if the Second Coming is not a subject under consideration.

There are certain other variations which might be supposed to indicate that Mark has toned down the picture (or, alternatively, that Matthew has heightened its colours). In verse 24 Mark has "In those days, after this distress" instead of Matthew's "Immediately after the distress of those days". And he omits the reference to the "sign of the Son of Man" which is preserved in Matthew 24.30. But there is no reason to think that the word "Immediately" is meant to carry any special emphasis; it might merely be a rendering of "Behold!" in an Aramaic original. "The sign of the Son of Man" is presumably authentic, since there is no Old Testament prophecy to account for it; Mark might omit it as unintelligible, or as an unnecessary duplication of what followed. On the whole, it must be admitted that Mark and Matthew are in close agreement; it is only in Luke 21 that you find traces of a really independent tradition.

Meanwhile, a difficulty of another sort arises. Our Lord assures us in verse 32 that the day and the hour are known only to the Father; unknown, therefore, to himself. This latter assertion is explicitly made



in the text of Mark; whether it originally stood in Matthew's text too was a matter of debate even in the days of St. Jerome. He decided against it, but the manuscript evidence in its favour is admittedly formidable. On the evidence of one Gospel, and perhaps two, we have to admit, it seems, that the knowledge which our Lord enjoyed as Man was limited. How are we to reconcile this with the traditional doctrine of the Incarnation?

The question is wrongly put; it is not precisely our Lord's *human* knowledge that concerns us here. If it had been, Mark would certainly have written "the Son of Man", and (although the text has been variously manipulated) no single manuscript contains any such addition. We must, therefore, interpret "the Son" as meaning the Divine Word; and since, in regard to mankind, he is essentially the self-communication of God (Matthew 11.27), a piece of incommunicable information like this lies outside the sphere of his activities; it is no part of the knowledge which he mediates.

Should the words "not even the Son" be treated as genuine in Matthew? They may be an insertion, based on Mark. On the assumption that Matthew, when he wrote, had Mark's text before him, that will mean that he omitted the words as likely to give rise to a theological misunderstanding. On the assumption that Mark, when he wrote, had Matthew's text before him, it will mean that Mark restored the full form of the utterance from private sources of knowledge. But the probability, in view of the manuscript evidence, is that Matthew's text did, originally, contain the utterance in its full form; then, in the time of the early Christological controversies, some copyist who was transcribing Matthew's Gospel (but not Mark's) came across the utterance and expunged it, as of doubtful theological tendency. Whatever may be said about the theory of interpolation in general, in this particular passage it lacks plausibility. Suppose a copyist anxious to ensure that Matthew agreed with Mark as closely as possible—why, with all the variations between the two Gospels in front of him, should he hit upon these three words as a suitable subject for interpolation; words which might, and in fact did, give rise to a long tradition of Christological controversy?

Verses 33 to 37, like the long passage in Matthew which corresponds

to them, may or may not have been part of a different discourse; cf. Luke 12.35-48. It is perhaps more than a coincidence that verse 37 supplies the answer to the question which remains unanswered in Luke 12.41.

14.1-21. *The anointing at Bethany; the Last Supper.* See notes on Matthew 26.1-25, and John 12.1-8. Mark agrees with John, as against Matthew, in supplying the kind of details which are often regarded as untrustworthy when only John has recorded them. The value of the ointment is emphasized by Mark and John almost in the same words (verse 3), and the price it would have fetched is reckoned at precisely the same figure (verse 5)—just so, it is Mark and John who tell us what it would have cost to feed the Five Thousand (6.37 above). It is difficult to see why the converted publican should have omitted these figures, if he had access to them. Contrariwise, Mark is less sweeping than Matthew in verse 4; it is not “the disciples” but “certain people” who complain about the waste of the ointment; the kind of modification which is labelled “sparing the Apostles” when Matthew or Luke, not Mark, is responsible for it. Mark’s “and” in verse 3 is less accurate than Matthew’s “but”; the story is inserted at this point, slightly out of its historical order, precisely to explain why Judas turned traitor, and relieved the chief priests of their embarrassment (see notes on Matthew 26.2).

If we understand the first words of verse 12 as meaning the day *before* the embargo on leaven began (not the day *on which* it began), the clause which follows will refer to the feast generally, “at the time when they killed the paschal victim” (not “on the day when they killed the paschal victim”). The precise directions of verses 13 and 14 do not occur in Matthew; the suggestion has been made that our Lord’s host was actually some member of Mark’s family—it is in his mother’s house that “many” are gathered together in Acts 12.12. “My room” probably means no more than that the room was being prepared for our Lord, not necessarily that he was in the habit of using it. Mark’s account of the traitor’s unmasking is more effective than Matthew’s, precisely because it stops short where it does. The point does not occur to us, because we know the story so well; but a man reading the Gospels for

the first time catches his breath at the appearance of Judas in Gethsemani, if he is reading Mark or Luke; if he is reading Matthew or John, he has been forewarned. Mark had perhaps a stronger sense of the dramatic than Matthew; see note on Matthew 16.16.

14.22-31. *Institution of the Eucharist; St. Peter's denial foretold.* See notes on Matthew 26.26-35. The sharing of the cup appears in verse 23 as the record of a fact; in Matthew it is the subject of a command. But evidently the Apostles drank because our Lord told them to; and to a Hebrew mind the phrase "he gave it to them and they all drank of it" is very little removed from "he gave it to them so that they could all drink of it". We must not, then, be tempted to suppose from Mark's description that they drank first, and the words of institution were pronounced afterwards. The prophecy of St. Peter's denial is, most probably, given here in its authentic form; certainly in its most dramatic form. "Cock-crow" or "second cock-crow" meant precisely the same thing; you were describing the last stage of the night just before dawn, with or without allusion to the fact that the cock had already crowed at midnight; cf. 13.35 above. And the end of verse 68 below, if genuine, reads very much like the record of a personal experience.

14.32-53. *The Agony in the Garden; the Betrayal.* See notes on Matthew 26.36-56. "Dismayed" in verse 33 represents a verb which Mark uses with a certain vagueness; in 16.5 it clearly indicates fear, but perhaps contains an element of surprise, which is its true meaning. In 9.14 above there was clearly no occasion either for surprise or for fear in the ordinary sense; we must suppose that our Lord when he came down from the mountain was received, like Moses, with awe. Neither awe nor surprise would be a natural feeling to connect with Gethsemani; and probably fear is meant, Mark, as usual, being a little more anxious to stress our Lord's complete humanity than Matthew. For "the hour" (Mark only) in verse 35 see notes on John 2.4. The end of verse 40 is a touching echo of 9.5 above; the same three Apostles fall under the same spell at the revelation of our Lord's Humanity, as at the revelation of his Divinity. "Enough" in verse 41 probably

means, "There has been enough watching", and explains the previous sentence (see notes on Matthew).

A curious difficulty arises over the Latin version of verse 33. The verb translated "to be distressed" is the same Greek verb in Matthew and in Mark. But a few manuscripts of Mark, by the addition of two letters, have the quite impossible reading "to be past caring", "to be disillusioned". This was the verb which confronted our Latin translators, and they did their best by rendering it "to be disgusted", "to have a sense of tedium"—mental, not physical, weariness is intended. Any literal translation of this would misrepresent the whole nature of the scene.

In verse 47, as in verse 4 above, Mark appears to be "sparing the Apostles"; he gives us "one of those who stood by" instead of "one of those who were with Jesus". There may have been a deliberate intention of shielding the leaders of the Church from the imputation of lawlessness, at a time when they were beginning to attract attention in Rome; John, writing at a later period, does not scruple to mention St. Peter by name (cf. note on Matthew 16.18). That the young man mentioned in verse 50 was St. Mark himself is a plausible guess which cannot be verified; it does not derive any support from tradition. If Mark was already a young man at the time of the Crucifixion, we should perhaps have expected him to have attained some prominence in the early history of the Church; yet he always appears in what seems to be a subordinate position (cf. II Tim. 4.11).

14.54-73. *Christ before the Council; St. Peter's denial.* See notes on Matthew 26.57-75. With the exceptions there mentioned, Mark's account runs on exactly the same lines as Matthew's, save for one puzzling difference. The "maidservant" of verse 69 is naturally taken to be the same as the "maidservant" of verse 66, who "again" unmasks St. Peter to the bystanders; whereas in Matthew "another maidservant" provokes the second denial. But "again" is a word of which Matthew and Mark seem peculiarly fond, even where it is not really in place, as in Matthew 21.36, Mark 12.4—you cannot really send another messenger *again*, any more than you can be seen *again* by a



different maidservant; the word is perhaps only put in to emphasize the fact that this is the second denial. "The maidservant" in verse 69 is therefore best understood of the portress on duty (cf. Acts 12.13); Mark assumes that we shall not mistake her for the same person, because St. Peter has now left the court and is in the dark of the entrance-hall; otherwise (the scene having changed) he would surely have written "the same maidservant".

Did the cock crow at the end of verse 68? A few manuscripts—but they are very ancient ones—omit the circumstance. It is easy to imagine why copyists should have been tempted to insert the words "and the cock crew"; they did not realize that "second cock-crow" was a familiar measure of time, and supposed that our Lord's prophecy would have remained unfulfilled unless the cock had crowed twice in St. Peter's hearing. On the other hand, it is noticeable that two of these same manuscripts omit the words "a second time" in verse 72; which looks as if some copyist, forgetting verse 30 above, had been trying to make Mark harmonize with Matthew more perfectly. Perhaps this is one of those passages where the reader does better to trust his own literary instincts, than to weigh manuscript evidence.

15.1-32. *The trial before Pilate; the Crucifixion.* See notes on Matthew 27.11-44. In verse 2, Mark gives the literal interpretation of "Thou sayest it", not the idiomatic interpretation as in 14.62. Probably the phrase always had a note of reluctance in it; "You have no right to ask the question, but as a matter of fact I am". And in this case it perhaps implied a further hesitation, "It depends what you mean by a king . . . yes, I suppose I am" (cf. John 18.33-37). This time, then, Mark would not, any more than the others, treat the formula as one of plain affirmation. In verse 7, Mark gives us the criminal record of Barabbas, of which we hear nothing in the first Gospel. In doing so, he is betrayed into talking about "the rebellion"—what rebellion? Some rising which Mark, as a Jew, remembers, and forgets that his Gentile readers have never heard of it. This is one of those unconscious touches which sometimes attest the authenticity of a record. But in verse 15 he is unconsciously influenced by his Roman surroundings; when he tells us that Pilate was anxious to "do the right thing" by the Jews, he

employs a rare idiom which is really a Latin idiom translated into Greek.

Mark is better informed than Matthew about Simon of Cyrene. He was "coming in from the country"; probably, therefore, "on their way out" in Matthew 27.32 refers, not to the praetorium, but to the city gate. He was the father of Alexander and Rufus, presumably names well known in the circles for which Mark wrote; it may be more than a coincidence that St. Paul sends greetings to a "Rufus, a chosen servant of the Lord" in Rome (Rom. 16.13).

The "third hour" of verse 25 is an obvious difficulty. The instinct of any Christian who is asked at what time of day our Lord was crucified is to reply, "He was nailed to the cross at noon, and died just three hours later". Such instincts must not be altogether despised; in a matter of this kind, it would not be surprising that an oral tradition should have come down from the first days of Christianity, the documents notwithstanding. There is no doubt that this notion is withstood by the documents.

Matthew is non-committal; 27.45 might be merely a resumption of the story from verse 35. But the natural interpretation of Luke 23.44 is that there had been an interval, which covers both the mocking and the repentance of the Good Thief, before noon. Mark says that it was the third hour, nine o'clock, when they crucified him. John 19.14 gives the sixth hour, noon, as the moment of the *Ecce Rex vester*, before our Lord was even condemned.

For the moment, we may disregard John's estimate. On the face of it, such an estimate is in violent contradiction, not only with the other Gospel accounts, but with all the probabilities of the situation. See notes on John 19.1-16. Are we compelled, if we would save Mark's credit, to hold that the Crucifixion began at nine o'clock in the morning? Let us observe in the first place that the words "they crucified him" in verse 24 are probably spurious. If we adopt what is obviously the true reading, the sentence becomes ungrammatical; meanwhile, the double recurrence of "they crucified him" in two successive verses is possible, but awkward. It looks very much as if the words "having crucified him" had been borrowed from Matthew by some copyist who did not notice that they interrupted the grammar; his motive would be plain—to make Mark

agree with Matthew in describing the Crucifixion first, the parting of the garments afterwards. If we strike the words out (or even, but less certainly, if we do not) verse 25 admits of a meaning quite different from that ordinarily given to it. The soldiers took our Lord out, made Simon help to carry his cross, brought him to Golgotha, offered him wine, divided his garments among them, and then, *after an interval of three hours from their start*, crucified him. "It was the third hour" will not mark the time of day; it will simply be a Hebrew way of saying, "three hours had now elapsed".

If Mark really gave "the third hour" as the time of the Crucifixion, we must understand him as defining, not a point of time, but a stretch of time—namely, the interval between nine o'clock and noon. The day being divided into stretches of three hours, not into stretches of an hour, "the third hour" went on until twelve o'clock struck. And if our Lord was crucified at eleven, or even rather later, it would still be the third hour because it could not yet be described as the sixth. For practical purposes, then, it is safest to assume that whereas the darkness lasted for three hours, the time during which our Lord hung on the cross may have been an hour or so longer, beginning about eleven.

In a few Greek manuscripts, but those the oldest we possess, verse 28 is missing. We know from Luke 22.37 that our Lord expected Isaiah 53.12 to be fulfilled in the circumstances of his death, and evidently it was. But we cannot be certain that Mark's Gospel, in its original form, drew attention to the fulfilment. Evidently, at some early date, a copyist might have written a foot-note to this effect in the margin, and a subsequent copyist might have mistaken the foot-note, in complete good faith, for part of the text.

15.33-47. *Our Lord's death and burial.* See notes on Matthew 27.45-66. The word rendered "wait", here and in Matthew 27.49, is in fact a mere colloquial way of intensifying the imperative, not easy to translate by a single equivalent. In Matthew 7.4 the effect is, "Here, let me take that smut out of your eye". In this passage, Mark and Matthew both have the same word (though some manuscripts of Mark have altered its form in the supposed interests of grammar); but Mark attributes it to the soldier with the sponge, Matthew to his com-

panions. The effect of the sentence in Mark is one of half-incredulous superstition; "I say, let's see whether Elias really comes to rescue him"—as if the man had been deliberately keeping up our Lord's strength with that in view. In Matthew, the action of the man with the sponge looks like a merely humanitarian gesture, and the comment is perhaps one of mockery: "Steady, let's see whether Elias comes to save him or not". On the whole, it seems probable that the translator of Matthew was misled by some obscurity in the Aramaic original, and that Mark has given us the authentic record.

Verse 38 is a sudden intrusion into the narrative, which we only accept without comment because we have Matthew's word for it that there was an earthquake. As it stands in Mark and Luke, the rending of the veil is assigned to no cause, and is presumably miraculous, whereas Matthew's story might be that of a special providence. Moreover, in Matthew the centurion is partly impressed by a catastrophe of nature, whereas in Mark and Luke it is only the manner of our Lord's death that impresses him. It is difficult to believe, at this point, that Mark was acquainted with Matthew's narrative, as we now have it. Is it possible that Matthew added finishing touches to his Gospel in a second edition (cf. notes on Matthew 28.11-15), and that this was one of them? These finishing touches might represent a tradition of the Church at Jerusalem, gradually built up from the reminiscences of people who had not, at the time of the Crucifixion, been in contact with the Apostolic circle. When the Gospels were first written, these stories about mysterious quakings of the earth, apparitions of men long dead, and so on, would be only unverified rumours, whose credit was uncertain. Only later on, when fresh corroboration had come in, would Matthew be induced to incorporate them in his Gospel—much as John seems to have added his twenty-first chapter by way of a postscript.

In Mark at any rate, although we have been told about the rending of the Temple veil, we have no evidence that the centurion was conscious of any convulsions of nature; an uncanny darkness hung over the scene, but to that he had grown accustomed. He may have been already impressed by what he saw, but the decisive turn of events which wrung his confession from him was the manner of our Lord's



death (verse 39). That it came so soon was, apparently, matter for surprise (verse 44); but the loud cry was perhaps even more out of the common—as a rule, Crucifixion drained a man's strength away gradually.

For the phrase in verse 43, "one of those who waited for God's kingdom", cf. notes on Luke 2.21-39. How is it that Pilate, in verse 44, is surprised at hearing of our Lord's death? According to John 19.31, he himself had given the order that death should be hastened on, and not only our Lord but the two thieves were dead by the time Joseph made his request (John 19.38). The answer seems to depend on a right interpretation of John 19.31, where "they asked Pilate" should be rendered "they had asked Pilate". The orders had been given before the Way of the Cross began; the soldiers were to get their work finished by sundown, hastening on death so as to make an early burial possible. It was before sundown when Joseph came to interview Pilate, who was not expecting to hear that there had, as yet, been any deaths. The words "after this" in John 19.38 refer back, in strictness, not to verse 37 but to verse 30 of that chapter.

16.1-8. *The empty tomb.* See notes on Matthew 28.1-15. In the course of these eight verses, Mark appears to contradict each of his fellow-Evangelists. He says nothing about the guards whose presence at the tomb is so emphasized by Matthew. He represents the women as buying their spices on the Saturday evening, whereas Luke 23.56 tells us they had done so on Friday afternoon. And he assures us that the sun had risen, whereas John assures us that it was still dark (Luke, too, talks of "very early dawn").

It must be admitted that Mark's evidence modifies the picture we should naturally have formed if we had had only Matthew to guide us. It seems clear that when the women came to the tomb they did not expect to find anybody on guard, no doubt because the chief priests had not advertised their last-moment precautions. It seems clear, too, that the women did not find anybody on guard; the circumstance would surely have been mentioned. The watch, then, had left their posts, either in flight, or to report the mysterious happenings at the tomb. The evidence of the women, as preserved for us by both

Evangelists, contained no reference to the watch, because they did not know about it. The chief priests were sensible enough to keep silence about it. Later—perhaps much later—when the facts came out, Matthew was no longer in a position to consult the holy women about what they had seen or had not seen. He put the two accounts together in a way which left his readers free to suppose (though not bound to suppose) that the soldiers and the women were present at the tomb simultaneously.

The conflict of evidence between Mark and Luke, though more direct, is in fact much less serious. The point was that by Sunday morning, when they started out on their journey, the holy women had provided themselves with the spices they needed. Whether they had actually bought these on Friday or on Saturday, or some of them on Friday and the rest on Saturday, was not a question which occupied Mark's attention, and the form of words he uses need not be pressed.

The difference between Mark and John turns, rather, on a point of emphasis. The expression which Mark uses for "at sunrise" definitely implies that the sun was up, even if it was only just up; the women, then, saw the angel in the clear light of day, with no shadows to confuse them, no terrors of the night to alarm them. At the same time, the devotion of the holy women, who lost no time in making their visit to the tomb, must have its due recognition; hence Mark himself tells us that it was "very early". But this is not enough for Luke, who prefers to call it "early dawn"; still less for John, who insists that it was still dark. Either emphasis is satisfied if we suppose that the journey, short as it was, was held up by delays and hesitations, so that it began before dawn and ended after sunrise. See further, notes on Luke 24.1-12, John 20.1-18.

It will be noticed (verse 7) that in this earlier part of the chapter Mark agrees with Matthew in naming Galilee as the rendezvous where our Lord will rejoin his Apostles—a matter of considerable importance (cf. notes on Luke 24.36-48, John 20.19-31). The meaning of verse 8 is evidently that the women did not speak to anybody *on their way back to the city*; no psychology in the world would account for their keeping silence, out of terror, when they had rejoined the Apostles.

16.9-20. *The epilogue.* These verses are received by the Church, together with the rest of Mark, as canonical, but it remains a literary problem how they come to stand where they do. Our two oldest manuscripts omit them; several other ancient manuscripts or versions indicate, while retaining them, that they were of doubtful authority. This doubt was known to the Fathers, and St. Jerome himself appears to have an open mind on the question. Meanwhile, the join at verse 9 comes very awkwardly, and the Magdalen is introduced in that verse as if mentioned for the first time, although she has been mentioned three times already in the preceding fifteen verses. It may be added that the style and vocabulary of the concluding section shew traits which are not characteristic of Mark.

That the Gospel, as Mark wrote it, did not end or was not meant to end at verse 8, can hardly be doubted. The end page or pages of a document can easily become detached, whether by accident or by design. And verse 8 forms an ending so inconclusive, that in certain manuscripts we find a single verse added, which is evidently a piece of patchwork designed to round off a defective literary product. Are we to suppose that the sixteen canonical verses were, in the same way, "written up" to make good the deficiency? It seems hardly probable; an editor working up his material from Luke (as some scholars have suggested) would not have been guilty of the apparent inconsistency between verse 13 here and Luke 24.34. It reads more like the rough notes of a catechist's instructions, on the lines of I Corinthians 15.3-8, which may have been pressed into the service to fill a gap, although the reference to the Magdalen betrayed it as belonging to a different context.

Who was the author of this fragment is a question which has been much discussed, but with little result. One tenth-century version has the words "Of the presbyter Ariston" scribbled on the last page; but evidently Ariston may have been the owner or the copyist of some Greek manuscript from which this version was translated. Meanwhile, we can have no certainty that the fragment does not come to us from Mark himself. It is certainly very ancient; St. Irenaeus, in the second century, unhesitatingly quotes it as Mark. If there was an *aide-mémoire* on the Resurrection known to have been used by the Evangelist (though possibly phrased in another man's Greek), it would naturally be used

to supply the deficiencies of the mutilated original. And its reiterated insistence on the incredulity of the Apostles is somehow reminiscent of Mark's own plain-spoken record; cf. 4.40, 6.52, 8.19-21, 9.9, 31.

The subject in verse 9 is not expressed; which looks as if this verse had been preceded, in its original context, by one in which our Lord was referred to. The appearance to the Magdalen is no doubt that recorded by John; it may or may not be that recorded in Matthew 28.9 and 10; see notes on John 20.1-17. It is difficult not to identify the appearance mentioned in verses 12 and 13 with that described by Luke (24.13-35). But it seems to come from an independent source; there is no echo of the Apostles' incredulity to be found in Luke 24.34. The inconsistency between the two accounts is perhaps traceable to the inconsistencies of the human mind; the Apostles accepted the evidence of the witnesses on hearsay, but no deep conviction would be produced by anything short of a personal experience; cf. John 20.25.

At first sight, a comparison of verses 14 and 19 would suggest that our Lord ascended into heaven on the evening of Easter Day. But this effect of foreshortening is doubtless due to the hasty sweep of the narrative. A new paragraph might easily be marked before verse 15, and another before verse 19. Verse 18 has a parallel in Luke 10.19; cf. also Acts 28.5.



## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE

1.1-4. *Introduction, addressed to Theophilus.* These verses are written in the classical—we might almost say, in the grand—manner, as if the author, for all his constant use of Aramaic sources, were a Greek to his finger-tips, and probably a man of considerable reading. The very first word gives rise to a major difficulty. If Luke wrote about A.D. 60, or even somewhat later, how can there have been “many” accounts of the Christian origins already in existence? Matthew may well be included as well as Mark; but if there were others, how is it that the very record of them has perished, that we do not even find them alluded to, still less quoted, by the Fathers?

It is perhaps important to observe the logic of the passage. Luke is not saying, “There are a great many Gospels already in existence, and therefore I am writing another”; the retort would be too obvious, that there were enough already. The sense is rather, “If there were just one official Gospel, authoritatively recognized in the Church and received everywhere, it might be presumptuous to retell the Gospel story in my own words. But since there is already *a plurality of Gospels* in existence, there can be no suggestion of impiety if I add to their number”. Presumably Luke knew of at least two; it is possible that some of the (much later) apocryphal stories, “The Gospel of St. Peter”, “The Gospel according to the Hebrews” and so on, may have pirated the titles of old, lost Gospels which were known to have existed. But there is no need to infer that, in this particular logical context, “many” implies more than two or three.

“As it befell” in verse 3 is literally “in order”; but there is no reason to think that Luke is (by inference) criticising his predecessors in the same field for fragmentary information, or for haphazard arrangement. In point of fact, although his Gospel omits some features which are present in Mark, and adds many which are absent, his order of events varies little from Mark’s throughout. “In order” is hardly more

than a flourish of the historian, promising us a straightforward account which will not jump to and fro, or confuse us with recapitulations. "The instruction thou hast received" in verse 4 implies reception by word of mouth, which suggests that the emphasis of Christian teaching was still on a tradition, not on any written record. We cannot tell whether "Theophilus" is a merely imaginary person, nor, if he was a real person, whether Theophilus was his real name. Tradition makes him a person of importance in Antioch. It has been suggested that the ceremonious address "most noble Theophilus" was only accorded to him when he was an enquirer, or at most a catechumen; by the time the Acts of the Apostles were written he has become a baptized Christian, and is called "Theophilus" *tout court* (Acts 1.1).

1.5-25. *Appearance of the Angel to Zachary.* In this section, and in the story of the Infancy generally, it seems clear that Luke is keeping very close to an Aramaic original, if not actually translating it. Both the construction of the sentences and the turns of phrase used are Hebrew throughout. "Approved" (literally, "just") implies careful observance of the law, both moral and ceremonial. "Thy prayer" in verse 13 is understood by some as meaning that Zachary was still praying for the fruitfulness of his marriage, but a more general intention for the salvation of his people is equally possible. In verse 15 the abstinence commanded does not necessarily point to a Nazirite vow; no allusion is made to growing the hair long, which such a vow equally prescribed. "From the time when he is yet in his mother's womb"; literally, "already from his mother's womb"; the Hebrew phrase often means simply "from birth", but the word "already" might take the process back behind actual birth. The prophecy of Malachy quoted in verse 17 is best taken literally; at any stage of a nation's history, though perhaps especially at a time of return from exile, such as Malachy had witnessed, there is an underlying tension between old and new ideas. Malachy was understood as having foretold that the Messiah would come to find a people morally prepared for him; which accounts, perhaps, for the bewilderment expressed by the Apostles in Matthew 17.10 (see notes there). Verse 22 is not meant, perhaps, to be taken quite literally; if Zachary remained dumb, you could not legitimately infer that he had

seen a vision, but you could infer that it was due to some inward experience, his general health being unimpaired.

1.26-38. *The Annunciation.* St. Joseph's residence at Nazareth is recorded by Matthew (2.23) as if it only began after the return from Egypt. But Matthew may have been less well informed than Luke; and it is besides possible that Nazareth, although it was already the home of the Blessed Virgin, was not that of St. Joseph till later. The term "full of grace" in verse 28 hardly occurs in the profane authors, and its occasional use in versions of the Old Testament does not help us to determine the exact meaning. In the New Testament it occurs here and in Eph. 1.6. By all analogy, the word should mean filled, or perhaps rather covered, with grace, and "regarded with favour" does not begin to do justice to it. The process which it describes is clearly not a unique one, verified only in the Blessed Virgin, since St. Paul uses it of Christians generally; but the tense used here is different, and points to a permanent possession, not to a mere acquisition which may be transient. In the Greek, there is a play upon words between "hail" and "grace", but this can only be accidental, since the message would clearly be communicated in Aramaic. "Blessed among women" is used in the Old Testament of two ruthless heroines, Jael (Judges 5.24) and Judith (Judith 13.23), a circumstance which may have added to the mystifying effect of the salutation. But some of the best manuscripts omit "blessed art thou among women" here, and it seems possible that some very early copyist was influenced by liturgical tradition in inserting the words; there is no doubt of their genuineness in verse 42 below.

The tense used in verse 33, "I have no knowledge of man" is a present, which must in the nature of the case be translated either as a perfect or as a future. If the Angel had said anything to suggest (what was in fact, tradition assures us, the case) that the conception of our Lord in the womb was to take place *immediately*, it would have been natural to give the verb a past significance, "since I have never yet had knowledge of man". But there is no such indication given in verse 31; and the straightforward explanation of the Blessed Virgin's bewilderment is thereby automatically excluded. It is unthinkable that an engaged woman should be puzzled by a prophecy, undated, about the future

career of her son, merely on the ground that the marriage has not yet been consummated. Thus there can be no satisfactory explanation of the passage except a fixed determination on the part of the betrothed woman that her marriage shall not be consummated; "I have no intention of the kind", she says, using the same formula as that used by our Lord in John 7.8. That she had taken a vow of virginity is thus made extremely probable, without being actually asserted.

"Shall be known for the Son of God" in verse 35 is literally "shall be called the Son of God", but our modern distinctions between the name and the thing were unfamiliar to the Hebrew mind. It would be possible to translate "that offspring of thine is holy, and shall be recognized as the Son of God", or "that offspring of thine shall be recognized as holy, the Son of God", but these renderings, though found in some of the earliest versions, seem to be based on the run of the Greek, which is not necessarily that of the underlying Aramaic. "Thy cousin" in verse 36 may be understood of any fairly close relationship. The balance of tradition has always been in favour of the belief that the Blessed Virgin, like St. Joseph, came from the tribe of Juda; Elizabeth, then, who came from priestly stock on her father's side (verse 5 above) was perhaps connected on the distaff side with Juda; or there may have been Levite blood in the family of Nazareth. All four Gospels lay stress on the importance of St. John's position as the Fore-runner of our Lord, but this is the only allusion to any relationship between them.

It does not seem probable that the Blessed Virgin spoke of the Angel's visit at the time, even to St. Joseph (see notes on Matthew 1.18-25); her prolonged visit to Judaea may perhaps be partly accountable for this.

1.39-55. *The Visitation; the Magnificat*. St. Elizabeth's utterance is evidently meant to be regarded as inspired; we are not, therefore, under any obligation to decide what the terms of it meant to her; "my Lord" is a title for the Messiah which she might have derived from Ps. 109.1. The pronouns in verse 45 are third-person, not second-person in the Greek; the Latin has translated according to the sense. It is not certain in the Greek, or even in the Latin, whether we should interpret "Blessed is she who has believed, because . . ." or "Blessed is she who has believed that . . ."



Verse 46 is famous for an odd freak of textual transmission. Two early manuscripts of the old Latin version, followed by one of later date, give "Elizabeth" instead of "Mary", and the same notion is found in one ecclesiastical writer of the fourth century, Nicetas of Remesiana. This has led some critics to suppose, in the teeth of the evidence provided by all other manuscripts and versions, that in the original text of the Gospel as Luke wrote it, the subject was unexpressed—and presumably, therefore, that "Elizabeth" should be supplied. But evidently, as a matter of mere textual criticism, it is equally possible that the word "Mary" should have fallen out by accident in the Greek copy from which the Latin versions derive, and that the translator, with a misguided instinct of lucidity, should have supplied "Elizabeth" as the name of the person last mentioned. Meanwhile, a sense of human probabilities makes it easy to adjudicate the authorship of verses 46–55. The egotism which would have provoked such an outburst on the part of Elizabeth is inconsistent, not only with verse 43, but with the whole genius of the situation.

The Magnificat has often been described, on the slenderest possible evidence, as an adaptation of Anna's song in I Kings 2.1–10. Actually, that passage has only contributed verse 53, and perhaps the musical effect of verse 46. Meanwhile, the whole of the Magnificat is recognizably a cento of Old Testament phrases, with the addition of some thirty-four words scattered here and there. These first witnesses of Christian truth lived in the full stream of prophetic tradition, and their thought appropriately clothed itself in remembered language.

The word "lowliness" in verse 48 is not easy. We can hardly suppose that the virtue of humility is meant; a virtue which we do not exercise by calling attention to our possession of it. The Greek word has strictly the sense of "humiliation", and those critics who attribute the Magnificat to St. Elizabeth have a ready explanation of its use; like Anna in I Kings 1.11 (where the same noun and the same verb are used) St. Elizabeth is thanking God for taking pity on her childlessness. But if the reminiscence comes from I Kings 1.11 (and not rather from Ps. 30.8), it does not follow that the situation contemplated is precisely the same; a quotation seldom runs exactly on all fours. Nor, indeed, does the parallel between Anna and Elizabeth run on all fours; verses 52 and 53

would be appropriate enough in the mouth of Anna, who is triumphing over her scornful rival Phenenna, but we do not hear of Elizabeth being subjected to any such persecution. Contrariwise, the word "humiliation" is fully appropriate in the mouth of the Blessed Virgin, if we follow the common belief that she, like her betrothed, was descended from king David. That the Davidic origin of the Messiah was prominent in men's minds at the time is clear from verse 69 below. David's family had come down in the world; Juda had no king but the Idumean Herod. Now, all that situation was to be reversed by the characteristic action of the God who rejects the proud and exalts the lowly.

"His wonders" (verse 49) is the plain meaning of the Greek, which uses a word ordinarily descriptive of God's miraculous interference; the Vulgate rendering "great things" does it less than justice.

1.56-80. *Birth of St. John the Baptist; the Benedictus.* In verse 56 Elizabeth is referred to as "her", not as being the last speaker, but because the author has started a new paragraph, and is picking up his story again, by a natural instinct, from verse 45. So, after the *Nunc dimittis*, "his" refers to the Child, not to Simeon (2.33). Whether the Blessed Virgin's visit ended before or after the birth of St. John is a question which has been much discussed, but on insufficient evidence; it is doubtful whether the order of narration in verses 56 and 57 can be held to settle the dispute. "They were for calling him Zachary" in verse 59 may only mean that they used it as a pet name for the time being, without prejudice to the evident rights of the parents in the matter. They can hardly have assumed *as a matter of course* that the son would be named after his father; this confusing modern practice was not unknown in antiquity, but was evidently rare. It is often assumed, on the strength of verse 62, that Zachary was deaf as well as dumb. But the common Greek word which signified either, or more usually both, has been deliberately avoided in verse 20 (though not in verse 22); and it would not be easy to explain the point at issue to a deaf man by signs—the tablet would have been produced earlier. Probably Zachary had been present at the discussion, and if the clansmen merely looked enquiringly at him, instead of asking him outright, it was so as to avoid causing further distress of mind to a nursing

mother. It is not clear whether the praises mentioned in verse 64 are to be identified with the Benedictus itself.

The Benedictus has its Old Testament echoes, though they are not so frequent here as in the Magnificat. In verse 69 "raised up a sceptre" (literally, "a horn") probably comes from Ezechiel 29.21; the verb used in that passage ("he has caused to sprout") strongly suggests that the imagery is that of Daniel 7.8, where a new "horn" represents a new branch of the royal family. The common notion of the horn as a symbol of strength may also be present. If we suppose that Zachary had learned from Elizabeth (or by some private inspiration) the Blessed Virgin's secret, the mention of "David" falls naturally into place, but the supposition is not entirely necessary; if Zachary expected a Messiah, he would expect him to be of Davidic origin. In verse 76 the Greek suggests a sharp transition, as if to imply "Hitherto we have been talking about the Christ himself, meanwhile you too, John, will have a part to play"; the same rare conjunction of particles appears in Matthew 16.16; "You have called me Christ, and now I have a name for you, the Rock". "The Lord", in the same verse, is evidently a Messianic title (cf. note on verse 43 above).

2.1-8. *The Nativity*. It has often been suggested that Luke has made a careless confusion of dates, representing our Lord as born at the time of the famous census taken by Quirinius, about A.D. 6, whereas it is evident from Matthew's account that he was born in the reign of Herod the Great (died 4 B.C.). There would have been some colour for this view, if Luke had written "This register was the one made" under Quirinius. But Luke did not write that; he wrote "this register was the first one made" under Quirinius. Not "the one first made", in the sense that the register was made *for the first time* under Quirinius; the Greek does not bear that sense. The use of the word "first" necessarily implies: "We all know that there was a census under Quirinius in A.D. 6; I am not talking of that, I am talking of an earlier census". Whether Luke was right or wrong, he did not just get his dates mixed up; his words shew beyond doubt that he believed in the existence of a census anterior to the census of A.D. 6.

The natural way of understanding him, at first sight, is to suppose

that Quirinius had—or Luke believed him to have had—a double term of office as proconsul of Syria. And indeed there is considerable evidence to support the view that Quirinius was twice proconsul of Syria; his first period coming to an end in 8 B.C., when Judaea was still nominally an independent kingdom, his second beginning in A.D. 6, when Judaea had become part of the province. It is possible, then, that our Lord was born at the time of a census which had already been set on foot in 8 B.C. But this view creates difficulties in our whole reckoning of New Testament chronology; nor is it easy to see why Luke wrote “This register was the first one made when Quirinius was governor”, when it would have been so much simpler to write, “This register was one made during Quirinius’ first governorship”.

It seems preferable, then, to translate, “This register was one made before Quirinius was governor”—it is not to be confused with the famous, the still-remembered “days of the registration” (Acts 5.37) in A.D. 6. The construction will be parallel with John 1.30, where “he existed first of me” can only mean “he existed before me”; there are parallels, too, in the Septuagint. Just so, in Matthew 26.17, Mark 14.12, we have to understand “the first day of the unleavened bread” as meaning “the day before the unleavened bread” (see notes on Matthew 26.17–25). Strictly, Luke should have written “This register was the one made before the one made under Quirinius”, just as Matthew and Mark, strictly, should have written “the day before the days of unleavened bread”, but such a cumbrous turn of phrase would naturally be avoided. On the assumption (which is still open to doubt) that Quirinius enjoyed a double term of office, Luke ought no doubt to have referred, not to “the governorship of Quirinius” but to “the second governorship of Quirinius”. But there is no reason why he should have known about the first governorship at all; the Roman proconsul would not be an important figure in Judaea while it was still a nominally independent country, ruled by the Herods.

But, granted that Luke meant us to understand him in that way, were his facts right? Was there actually a world-wide census in or around 4 B.C.? We need not, perhaps, overstress the wording of verse 1; the whole affair was not necessarily concluded with a stroke of the pen. But it is clear that registration was part of Augustus’ general policy



for tightening up the reins of empire; and the date suggested would be a likely one for the registration of Syria, which had recently been pacified after heavy fighting on its northern borders. Herod, as the ruler of a satellite country, would be very likely to conduct a simultaneous registration of his own subjects, and would be well advised to humour national sentiment to the extent of conducting such a registration by tribes, not by districts.

Luke's statement is thus thoroughly in accord with the probabilities, and a curious piece of evidence exists to support it. Tertullian, in the second century, arguing with the heretic Marcion, appeals to the existence of "archives" at Rome which bear faithful witness to the Lord's birth, and treats it as a matter of certain knowledge that a census was held in Judaea by Sentius Saturninus. If he had said "by Quirinius", we might have discounted his statement as a mere echo of Luke. That he should have hit on the name of a proconsul who ruled from 8 to 6 B.C. makes it highly probable that his information, whatever its exact value, was based on independent research. In point of fact, it is doubtful (as we have seen) whether a Roman official could have ordered a census at that date in Judaea. But Saturninus may have ordered a census in the province of Syria, and Herod may have followed suit by ordering a census in his own kingdom of Judaea which was still being conducted at a time shortly before his, Herod's, death.

It is natural, in verse 5, to interpret Luke as meaning that St. Joseph went "to give in his name with his wife", not that St. Joseph "went with his wife to give in his name"; the order of the Greek would otherwise be cumbrous. But it appears that in Egypt women as well as men were registered in person, and it is likely enough that the same rule should apply in Palestine. The word "wife" is of doubtful authority, being omitted by the best Greek manuscripts; but in the circumstances the variation is not of great importance (cf. Matthew 1.20). "Her first-born" is no doubt looking forward to verse 22 below (see notes on Matthew 1.18-25).

2.8-20. *The visit of the shepherds.* "The whole people" in verse 10 is expressly the Jewish people; the call of the Gentiles is still a mystery hidden with God. In verse 12 we might understand not "the sign by

which you are to know him", but "a sign that my words are true"; the situation, however, seems to call for some mark of identity. That the Child would be in swaddling-clothes is perhaps only an indication of age; it is rather far-fetched to contrast them, as a sign of loving care, with the manger as a sign of apparent neglect. In verse 14, the manuscript evidence is definitely against "good-will among men". Peace is promised to those who are God's friends; literally, "to men of beneficent purpose". This may mean people who are in good dispositions, but in accordance with Hebrew idiom it is better to suppose that the beneficent purpose is God's; they are men of his predilection. In verse 17, the Vulgate Latin has "they ascertained the truth", but the Greek clearly means "they made known the truth"—which indeed is the obvious introduction to verse 18.

2.21-39. *The Presentation.* In verse 25, we ought perhaps to understand the words "waited patiently for comfort to be brought to Israel" as indicating a particular school of piety, based on Isaiah 8.11-18; it would be in reaction from the Zealots, with their policy of armed resistance to the Roman occupation. "Ruler of all" in verse 29 is a title seldom given to God in the New Testament (Acts 4.24, Apoc. 6.10); here it has a special appropriateness, since it is the technical word for a master of slaves, and perhaps Simeon thinks of himself as a slave who is being granted manumission. But although the Greek suggests this, the metaphor would not be so clearly expressed in the Aramaic.

The order of the two sentences in verse 35 has been transposed in the translation. If the order of the original is preserved, it is almost impossible for anybody reading the passage aloud to make it clear that the words "as for thy own soul, it shall have a sword to pierce it" are a parenthesis. "The thoughts of many hearts shall be made manifest" is merely an *amplification* of verse 34; the Child will divide humanity into two camps, forcing everybody to declare himself. "Thy own soul shall have a sword to pierce it" is the *result* of verse 34; she will be pierced, to the very soul of her, by watching her Son stretch out his hands all day to a people that cries out against him (Rom. 10.21). This dislocation in the order of the sentence gave rise to the fantastic speculation of Origen (echoed in some of the Greek Fathers) that the sword

which entered the heart of the Blessed Virgin was a sword of doubt. Such a metaphor is wholly foreign to the language of the New Testament; meanwhile, doubt would find its way into the spirit, the principle of intelligence, not into the soul, the principle of life.

Verse 37 seems to state quite plainly that Anna had been eighty-four years a widow; she must, then, have been over a hundred at the time of our Lord's birth. Some commentators would interpret "and now, as a widow, she had reached the age of eighty-four". But, if that were the meaning, why was it necessary for Luke to record the duration of her married life?

Verse 39 is naturally understood as meaning that the Holy Family went straight from Jerusalem to Nazareth, or at most that they returned to Bethlehem for a day or two. It is, however, ordinarily interpreted to mean that they went back from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, were visited by the Magi, fled into Egypt, remained there for a period of years—perhaps four years—and returned to Nazareth at the end of it. Luke, in that case, has used a highly elliptical form of expression. In the alternative, we might suppose that the visit of the Magi took place just before the Presentation; that the Holy Family returned to Nazareth, and fled from Nazareth, not from Bethlehem, into Egypt; but this seems an excess of precaution, since the Massacre of the Innocents would not, in any case, have affected Nazareth. The only way to avoid these embarrassments is to suppose that the visit of the Magi and the Flight into Egypt took place within a day or two after our Lord's birth; that the Flight was one of some eighty miles, only reaching the confines of Egypt, and that it only lasted a few weeks, terminating in the death of Herod and in the Presentation. On this reading, the two narratives dovetail well enough; although Matthew seems unaware of any previous residence at Nazareth, such as verse 39 here implies. See notes on Matthew 2.3-23.

2.40-52. *The finding in the Temple*. "Among their travelling companions" in verse 44 perhaps means that the children of the party went on ahead of, or lagged behind, their elders. Thus the absence of our Lord would not be discovered till the pilgrims had covered a day's march on their journey home; it would take another day for Mary and

Joseph to retrace their steps, and they probably found him on the third day, which is described in verse 46 as "after three days" (cf. notes on Mark 8.27-9.1). The meaning of our Lord's reply in verse 49 is probably that the place where his Father dwells is the right place to look for him (cf. Gen. 41.51). "My Father's business" is not an impossible rendering, but no precise parallel is quoted; we should have expected "at" rather than "in", if activities were in question, and it seems more natural that our Lord should indicate the place where, rather than the pursuits in which, he was likely to be found. The mention of "wisdom" in verse 52 is doubtless a reference to that advance in experimental knowledge without which the Humanity of our Lord would not have been perfect at every point.

3.1-22. *St. John's preaching and the Baptism of our Lord.* See notes on Matthew 3.1-17. The first verse is peculiar to Luke, and is in the manner of the professional historian. The emperor Augustus died in A.D. 14, and if we regard the rest of A.D. 14 as the first year of his successor (which seems to have been the ordinary way of reckoning) the fifteenth year of Tiberius will be A.D. 28. Some scholars would date the beginning of Tiberius' principate from the year (A.D. 11 or 12) when he was associated with Augustus, as a kind of co-adjutor, in the administration of the Empire, and would thus bring the date of St. John's public appearance rather earlier. But it seems doubtful whether this system of reckoning was in fact used, and the natural inference we should draw from this passage, if it stood alone, would be that St. John began baptizing in 28 or even 29. For further discussion of these chronological problems see notes on John 2.12-25. If the reading of the best manuscripts is right, verse 2 begins with the very curious phrase "when Annas and Caiphas were (or was) high priest". Annas was actually deposed by the Roman governor in A.D. 15, and after two unsuccessful experiments the high priesthood was allotted (by the same authority) to his son-in-law Caiphas; Caiphas is expressly described as high priest by Matthew (26.3 and 57) and several times by John, in connexion with the story of the Passion. Evidently Annas continued to enjoy considerable prestige, and Luke (perhaps following some tradition of Jewish orthodoxy) still represents him as high priest at a later date (Acts 4.6). A suspicion



naturally presents itself to the mind that Luke wrote in this passage, "while Annas was high priest", and some very early harmonist is responsible for adding, in defiance of grammar, "and Caiphas".

The utterances of St. John in verses 7-9, 16 and 17 are verbally the same in Matthew and Luke, though only verse 16 is present in Mark. If we compare Matthew with Luke we find the same phenomenon constantly recurring, not in descriptions of incidents, but in reported utterances. Those who believe that Matthew was originally written in Greek naturally ascribe it to the use of a common Greek source by Matthew and Luke. If we hold the traditional belief that Matthew wrote originally in Aramaic, the most probable explanation is perhaps that a selection of reported speeches, taken from the Greek translation of Matthew, early became current, and was used by Luke—perhaps occasionally also by Mark. But guesses of this kind are evidently uncertain. In the present instance it looks as if Matthew had put the utterance beginning "Who was it that taught you, breed of vipers . . ." in its right setting; he represents it as addressed to the Pharisees and Sadducees. Luke, as if he had come across the words of St. John without any clear rubric attached to them, represents them as addressed to the crowds in general, which seems less probable. Verses 10-15 are peculiar to Luke, and were presumably derived from a separate source.

3.23-38. *Our Lord's genealogy.* Cf. notes on Matthew 1.1-17. The idea that Luke meant to trace our Lord's genealogy through his mother, not through his foster-father, like Matthew, seems to have occurred to a few Christian writers as early as the fifth century; but they did so by arbitrarily inserting the name of Joachim after that of Joseph. Our own manuscript tradition goes back much earlier, and shews no trace of any such reading. More recently, some scholars have attempted to reach the same result by leaving the text as it stands, but giving it a different interpretation. Verse 23 is naturally understood as meaning that our Lord was, in common estimation, the son of Joseph, the son of Heli, and so on. It is suggested that we should render "being by repute the son of Joseph, (but in reality the descendant) of Heli" etc. We should not have expected the Evangelist to leave so much to our imagination. It seems better to accept Matthew's

and Luke's genealogies as both giving his legal, not his natural, line of descent. Jeremias 22.30, although in strictness it need only mean that Jechonias will not be succeeded by any son of his body, quite probably means that he will have none; there is no mention of them in IV Kings 24.12, where we should expect it. If the line of David through Solomon became extinct with Jechonias, Salathiel might easily be described by a genealogist as his "son" (Matthew 1.12), as being the heir to the Davidic succession, although in reality he was descended from David not through Solomon but through Nathan (verse 31 here). A royal lineage of such importance would be jealously chronicled even when the family had come down in the world, and if Jacob (Matthew 1.16) died childless like Jechonias, it might be that the next traceable heir was St. Joseph, although St. Joseph was in fact the son of Heli, and descended from a different son of Zorobabel.

The words "the son of God" at the end of the chapter are presumably only a genealogist's flourish which Luke has allowed to stand. The idea that the end of verse 38 is meant to justify the end of verse 22 naturally suggests itself, but only to be dismissed as ludicrous; it did not need a message from heaven to tell the world that our Lord was the Son of God by a title which he shares with every human being who has ever existed.

4.1-13. *Our Lord's temptation.* See notes on Matthew 4.1-11. Mark only describes the temptation in the briefest possible summary; Matthew and Luke are in close agreement about what was said. Once more, if we suppose that Luke derives his material from Matthew, it looks as though he had access to Matthew's dialogue, but not to his *mise-en-scène* (cf. notes on 3.1-22). Their wording is so closely alike, that both omit the challenge "If thou art the Son of God" when Satan offers all the kingdoms of the world. Yet Luke reverses the order of Matthew's second and third temptations. His source does not seem to have preserved the words "Away with thee, Satan" (Matthew 4.10), and he was left to devise his own order of events; it seemed natural, perhaps, to group the two scenes in the wilderness together, and finish up with the episode which left our Lord back in civilization again. But such inferences should only be made with reserve; it is possible that

Luke had a quite independent source of information, which recorded the three temptations in their historical, not in their dramatic order; the dialogue here is made up so largely of quotations from the Greek Septuagint, that the coincidence of language cannot be stressed.

Luke alone ends up with the curious statement that the devil left our Lord "until the appointed time". In view of Luke 22.53, John 14.30, commentators have inferred that Satan returned to the attack in Gethsemani.

4.14-30. *The sermon at Nazareth.* From whatever source Luke drew his account of the temptation, it is clear that the scene at Nazareth which immediately follows did not figure in the common tradition. Only in verses 23 and 24 do we catch an echo of reminiscence; but the incident recorded in Matthew 13.52-58 may be quite distinct. It must be confessed that the setting of the whole story is not clear. Our first impression of Matthew 13.52-28 and Mark 6.1-6 is that the people of Nazareth had heard great things about the new Prophet, and were prepared to take him seriously, until he actually appeared in their midst and they realized that it was only the Son of Joseph; then they were "scandalized" in the usual sense of the word, i.e. they had an unpleasant surprise, they were disappointed in him. And he was disappointed in his turn, did few miracles there. Luke's parallel picture is quite different; the people of Nazareth sit listening to our Lord in admiration; how wonderful that the Son of Joseph, one of themselves, should have attained such heights! But he sees what is in the back of their minds; they are waiting for a miracle, and he is determined not to indulge their curiosity. He tells them so; tells them that he does not expect a genuine welcome in his own native town; and they, stung by the criticism, turn on him with fury . . . The same elements enter into either picture, but the picture itself is oddly different. In Matthew and Mark, recognition of our Lord's identity occasions contempt; in Luke—there is no getting round his statements—admiration. In Matthew and Mark, the absence of miracles is the result, in Luke it is the cause, of a want of *rapprochement* between the Prophet and his fellow-countrymen.

There are blurred outlines, but is it really a case for the harmonist? The Evangelists were concerned to narrate events, not to make

psychological comments on them. And the reactions of a village community towards the great man it has produced are not simple ones. They are proud of him; he reflects credit on his schooling; and in the presence of strangers they will boast about his accomplishments. But meantime, he must not put on airs here, among his neighbours; to them, he is only the Son of Joseph still. In particular, whatever gifts he has developed, whatever influence he has attained, must be at their disposal; that goes without saying. It was, surely, this mixed attitude of admiration, and patronage, and small-mindedness, which met our Lord at Nazareth, and seemed to stifle him. No need to ask whether the amazement of the villagers was really more of a compliment or of an insult. No need to ask at what moment, or on which side, the sense of disappointment began. The whole situation was, from the first, impossible; Jesus Christ was for all men, and he found himself expected to be a Nazarene.

In attacking this kind of parochialism, our Lord reminds his audience, in verses 25-27, that Elias did one of his most famous miracles for a Gentile, the widow of Sarepta, and Eliseus did one of his most famous miracles for a Gentile, Naaman the Syrian. It seems natural to suppose that the call of the Gentiles was in our Lord's mind as he spoke; and that Luke, as a good disciple of St. Paul, had the call of the Gentiles in mind when he recorded it. Did the people of Nazareth realize what was insinuated? Only, it is to be presumed, remotely; the Gentile references were an added sting to their local pride, but they were not yet ready to have the programme of the new kingdom announced to them. Verse 30 may, but does not necessarily, record a miraculous escape; a mob does not always know its own mind.

The figure given in verse 25, three years and six months, is repeated in James 5.17. In III Kings 18.1 we are told that Elias went to meet Achab in the third year, i.e. after two years and a fraction; but this probably gives the time during which Elias had lodged with the widow, having spent the first months of drought by the brook Kerith, which ran dry at the end of the season (III Kings 17.7).

4.31-44. *An exorcism; Simon's wife's mother.* See notes on Mark 1.1-28, Matthew 8.14-17. "Checked the fever" in verse 39 is literally



"rebuked the fever". This phrase is peculiar to Luke, and its very singularity shews it to be a genuine, independent reminiscence. It seems to be implied that our Lord actually addressed words to the fever, as he did to the sea (compare "checked" in Matthew 8.26 with the parallel passage in Mark 4.39). Only a very shallow criticism would infer from this that our Lord ascribed disease to the influence of malignant personal agents. The words were not necessary to the cure, any more than the laying on of hands in verse 40; they were didactic, meant to shew the bystanders that his will could directly influence even inanimate things, even the conditions which determined the state of the weather, or the health of a patient. In verse 40, "he laid his hands *upon each one of them*" is a gracious detail for which we are indebted to Luke. For "Galilee" at the very end of the chapter some of the best manuscripts have "Judaea". If this is the true reading, we must not conclude that Luke is referring to the Jerusalem visits so often described by John; he would hardly change the scene without giving us more definite notice of the transition. Luke will have used "Judaea" in a wide sense for "Palestine". But it remains possible that "Judaea" is a mere slip of the pen, due to the wandering attention of a copyist.

5.1-11. *The miraculous draught of fishes.* Peculiar to Luke; a similar but evidently distinct incident is recorded in John 21. It will be observed that in the preceding paragraph Luke (as if he were following his sources unreflectively) has brought in the name of "Simon" without any introduction; Matthew (4.18-22) and Mark (1.14-20) had prefaced it by the story of St. Peter leaving his nets beside the Lake. Now we are presented by Luke with what appears to be a quite different account of St. Peter's conversion; a different account of the same incident, the phrase in verse 10 about "fishing for men" being common to all three narratives. On the whole, the following would seem to be the simplest explanation of the discrepancy. Matthew and Mark recorded the call of the first four Apostles in its due place, at the very outset of the ministry. They included in this a saying of our Lord's about "fishing for men", which had come down to them without

any indication of its true context; it seemed to fit in there. Luke, from some independent source, knew the whole history of the miraculous draught, and knew that this was the occasion of the saying in question. Not sure whether his predecessors were describing this or some other incident, he omitted all mention of how the Apostles were called, and told the full story of the miracle in its due place. The miracle was not, in fact, connected with what we usually describe as the "call" of the Apostles; they had left their nets on the impulse of the moment to follow a new Master, but they had not as yet abandoned their trade of fishing. Not only has Luke given us the true context of the phrase "fishing for men"; he has recorded the circumstance that it was not addressed to the Apostles in general, but to St. Peter.

The phrase "washing their nets" in verse 2 gives us a deceptive echo of Matthew 4.21, Mark 1.19. On that earlier occasion James and John were *repairing* their nets, evidently reconditioning them in a hurry, so as to take advantage of favourable conditions—Andrew and Peter were already making a cast. On this later occasion all four had been fishing with no result, and were *washing* their nets to get rid of the mud and shingle which the operation had entailed. Verse 6 does not necessarily involve a miracle, properly so called; it was enough that a special providence should attract a shoal of fish to the spot, although the conditions were unfavourable, and that our Lord should be preternaturally aware of the circumstance. "Leave me to myself, Lord" in verse 8 is literally "Go out from me, Lord"; but they are still in the boat (cf. verse 11), and the request cannot be taken literally. St. Peter is simply trying to express the sense of unworthiness; the right word does not always come on these occasions (cf. Mark 9.5). If the events of 4.38-44 were still fresh in his mind, the words were wrung from him by the cumulative effect of *two* marvellous experiences (cf. Mark 6.52). The change of title from "Master" in verse 5 to "Lord" in verse 8 can hardly be an accident. Is it an accident that the Apostle is referred to as "Simon Peter"? It appears to be an anachronism (cf. 6.14 below), and the double title, common in St. John, appears only twice in the Synoptic Gospels. In Matthew 16.16 it seems designed to confer dignity on the chief of the Apostles at a significant moment of his

career, and Luke's instinct in the present passage may well have been the same. Verse 11 is perhaps adapted from Matthew 4.22, Mark 1.20, the word "all" being introduced to suggest that, this time, the Apostles finally abandoned their trade of fishermen.

5.12-39. *The leper and the palsied man; call of Matthew; two difficulties answered.* See notes on Matthew 8.1-4 and 9.1-17. The story of the palsied man, as told by Luke, is something of a puzzle. The latter part of it, from verse 20 onwards, closely resembles both Matthew and Mark. But verses 17-19 are not represented in Matthew at all, and although Mark vouches for the facts, it is not Mark's narration of them that Luke has followed here. He seems to have been following, instead, some Aramaic source of his own.

The presence of Pharisees and lawyers from every part of Palestine in a single building in Capharnaum is surprising, especially at so early a period in the ministry. Luke has perhaps heightened his effect; there is no indication in Matthew or Mark of an unusually large gathering. "To grant healing"; literally, "to heal them", according to the manuscript tradition followed by the Vulgate. But the better reading is probably "so that he should heal"; the divine power is present manifesting itself in miracles performed by Jesus Christ, who himself said "The Father, who dwells continually in me, achieves in me his own acts of power" (John 14.10). We must understand, not that our Lord had greater miraculous powers at one time than at another, but that (in spite of hostile observers) there were moral conditions present among his audience here which favoured the exercise of them (cf. note on Mark 6.1-6). The statement that the palsied man was let down "through the tiles" is a vague one; presumably his friends cleared away some rather primitive piece of roofing and let down the bed through the aperture so made (cf. notes on Mark 2.1-12).

There is a remarkably close correspondence between the three Synoptic Gospels all through the conversations which follow on the call of St. Matthew; Luke, unlike the others, makes it clear that the scene of them was St. Matthew's house, not "the house" in Capharnaum which seems to have been usually at our Lord's disposal. In verse 36 this resemblance suddenly breaks down. Whereas Matthew and Mark

represent the patch as taken from a roll of new cloth—that, at least, is how we should ordinarily interpret them—Luke gives us the rather improbable picture of a piece being taken out of a new garment to patch an old one. He is credited by some scholars with having introduced a new symbolic meaning into the passage. The explanation is probably much simpler.

Matthew's version can be interpreted in either of two ways. It may mean (1) "the patching of it takes away from the garment", that is, the strong web of the new cloth pulls threads out of the old cloak; this is the interpretation given in Mark (2.21). Or it may mean (2) "it (the patch) takes away from the garment its fulness", that is, presumably, the uniformity of its pattern; this is the interpretation given in the Vulgate rendering of Matthew. Luke, here, can hardly have been following Mark, whose definite language ("the new from the old") would not have given rise to a mistake. He followed Matthew, and interpreted him in sense (2). But what could be the sense of saying that a patch "takes away the fulness" from the patched garment? (The sense of "pattern" did not occur to him.) He assumed, therefore, that the patch was taken, not from a new roll of cloth, but from a new garment; and it was this *new* garment that lost its "fulness" when the patch was taken out. But evidently something remained to be said about the effect of the process on the *old* garment as well; so much was clear from the sister parable of the bottles. Luke therefore added, what is plainly true, that the new cloth in such cases does not really match the old; they do not "harmonize".

Verse 39 is omitted by one Greek manuscript of good authority, and by several manuscripts of the old Latin version. "All at once" is omitted by the best manuscript tradition, which also gives "the old is good", rather than "the old is better". Assuming that the verse is genuine, and that the saying is one uttered on this occasion, there can be no reasonable doubt that the old wine represents the Law, and the new wine the Gospel. Our Lord is not contrasting their merits, nor criticizing (here) the attitude of conservative Judaism. He is simply calling attention to the existence of a conservative tendency in human nature, and by inference attributing the attitude of his opponents, courteously enough, to this influence.



6.1-11. *A ruling on the sabbath.* See notes on Matthew 12.1-11. Verse 8 creates a difficulty. Luke writes as if the thoughts of our Lord's critics had been unexpressed; he "knew" what they were thinking. But in Matthew 1.10 we are told that they had put the question, "Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath?" as a question demanding Rabbinical solution. It looks as if Luke had been following Mark (3.1-5), who says nothing about a direct challenge, and had supplied the opening words of verse 8 to soften down the abruptness of Mark's narrative. This he would do from the analogy of 5.22 above. But it is noticeable that, whereas the verb used in that passage probably implies a miraculous power of reading men's hearts, in the present passage he gives us no indication of the kind. *In fact* our Lord knew because he had been asked, but Luke was unaware of this.

"The next sabbath but one" in verse 1 is perhaps the best rendering that can be given of a very obscure word in the Greek. It does not appear in many of the best manuscripts, no doubt being rejected as meaningless; perhaps it may be due to some marginal note by a copyist which crept into the text in an altered form. The Synoptic Gospels seldom give us exact dating until we reach Holy Week; nor does Matthew (9.1-8, 12.1-8) represent the two incidents as connected in time. Verse 11 is far less definite in its implications than the corresponding verses in Matthew (12.14) and Mark (3.6); it is as if Luke were slurring over the bitterness displayed by our Lord's enemies at this early stage.

6.12-19. *The Apostles chosen; our Lord preaches to the multitude.* The list of the Apostles is given as in Matthew 10.1-4, and Mark 3.13-19. Simon "the Cananean" is here described as "the Zealot" only because Luke has been at pains to translate a word which Mark, like the translator of Matthew, had left in its Aramaic form. It may be a general description of Simon's character, or (more probably) it may indicate that he had belonged to "the resistance" against the Roman government; he was a partisan. "Thaddaeus" in Matthew and Mark was probably a second name or nickname used, during our Lord's life-time, to distinguish the faithful Judas from the traitor; Luke and John, using the language of the early Church, call him "Judas", although Luke (here and in Acts 1.13) is careful to describe him as "Judas of

James". This would ordinarily be taken to imply that his father was called James, but it is generally accepted that "brother of James" is meant here; cf. St. Jude's Epistle, verse 1.

Verses 17-19 correspond to Mark 3.7-12 (see notes on Mark 3.6-19). In Mark, the passage seems to lack relevance; Luke makes it the preface to a collection of our Lord's public utterances, commonly known as "the Sermon on the Plain" to distinguish it from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7. But the narrative, just as in Mark, seems to lack sequence; the Twelve are chosen, and what follows is not (as in Matthew) a series of considerations about the apostolic life, but a series of considerations addressed to Christians generally. Meanwhile, the directions given to the Twelve in Matthew 10 are reserved for Luke 10, where they appear as addressed to the seventy disciples. More than ever we get the impression that what Luke borrows from Matthew (or from some source used by Matthew) is not narrative but dialogue, and dialogue ill furnished with rubrics.

6.20-49. *The Sermon on the Plain*. See notes on Matthew 5.1-12, 36-48, 7.1-5, 15-29. It is probable that verses 39-45 are derived from Matthew, or from some common Greek source. The remainder, from the dissimilarity of its language, must be traced to an independent tradition, and though much of it covers the same ground as the Sermon on the Mount, we cannot be certain that the two Evangelists are reporting, in every case, an utterance delivered on the same occasion. Any teacher whose audience is constantly changing will inculcate the same lesson more than once; language and even treatment will vary. This applies especially to verses 20-26. The Eight Beatitudes were pronounced for the benefit of the Twelve, on a mountain-side, away from the multitude. The four beatitudes with their four antithetic woes were pronounced in the presence of the Twelve, and with immediate reference to them, but for the benefit of the multitude—unless Luke has told his story very badly indeed.

In the hearing of the multitude, our Lord speaks in parables; only when he is alone with his favoured disciples does he disclose his inner meaning (Mark 4.11). Hence, on this public occasion, the poor in spirit are referred to simply as the poor; those who hunger and thirst for right-

ness of heart are simply the hungry and thirsty (cf. John 4.13, 14). No doubt our Lord has purely economic distinctions in mind; the rich are less likely than the poor to be awakened to a sense of spiritual need. But it seems natural to suppose that the beatitudes of the Plain have the same general sense as the beatitudes of the Mountain, and it would be a mistake to interpret Luke without reference to Matthew.

Verses 27-38 are a fuller assertion of the Christian *lex talionis* which is laid down in Matthew 5.38-48. The contrast between the Old Law and the New finds no place here; perhaps because our Lord was unwilling to depreciate the law of Moses, even in appearance, before a public gathering which might misunderstand him. Verses 39, 40 and 45 do not echo the Sermon on the Mount, but appear in other contexts in Matthew (15.14, 10.24, 12.34). In verse 40 the word "perfected" conveys the same sense as Matthew's "it is enough". Our Lord seems to have used similar words on more than one occasion; here, in view of verse 39, the reference seems purely general. The stream does not rise higher than its source; let the pupil con his lesson never so carefully, his doctrine, for better or worse, will be his master's and no more.

7.1-17. *The centurion's servant; the widow's son at Naim.* For the former incident, see notes on Matthew 8.1-17. At first sight, we might suppose that Luke and Matthew are describing two separate events. Matthew says nothing about the embassy of Jewish friends who came to plead for the centurion; and if we had only his account to go upon, we should probably assume (the Greek word being ambiguous) that it was the centurion's son, not his servant, who had the palsy. But (as commonly happens where Matthew and Luke agree, without Mark as a bridge between them) the dialogue is almost word for word the same; we could not, then, suppose that Luke is describing a different incident without supposing that he had been guilty of great carelessness in dealing with his sources. It may also be observed that the slightly pompous attitude of the Jewish spokesmen is admirably contrasted with the simplicity of the centurion himself. Even in the arrangement of his material, Luke is reminiscent of Matthew; this miracle follows immediately after the Sermon on the Plain in Luke, just as it follows almost immediately after the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew.

The most natural assumption, then, is that the translator of Matthew was using the ambiguous word in the sense of "servant", as Luke does in verse 7; that Luke, although he was able to enrich the story from private sources of information, was content to copy the dialogue from Matthew, or from some common source; and that Matthew's account is deficient, though not inaccurate. The centurion, in fact, "approached" our Lord twice, first through his friends, and then in person; the tradition which Matthew followed, telling the story in brief, treated the two approaches as one. Luke had the whole of Matthew's dialogue at his disposal, but perhaps in dialogue form, without indication of context; he gives us Matthew 8.11 and 12 in a different setting later on (Luke 13.28, 29).

The story of the widow's son is peculiar to Luke. He is clearly following an Aramaic source; the evidences of translation in verse 12 are unmistakable. "And now" in verse 11, literally "in the (time) following", is the reading of the best Greek manuscripts; but there is some support for the reading "on the next (day)".

7.18-35. *Our Lord and his Fore-runner.* See notes on Matthew 11.1-14. Once more it looks as if Luke was giving us Matthew's dialogue, supported by rubrics of his own (in verses 20-21, 29-30). He adds nothing to the story, unless it be the detail that St. John sent *two* of his disciples; but "two of his disciples" (and not "by means of his disciples") is probably the right reading in Matthew as well. Verses 29 and 30 form a kind of historical note, which is interesting because it suggests that Luke himself felt the difficulty of our Lord's words recorded in verse 35; "gave God his due" and "vindicated" are the same word in the original.

7.36-8.3. *A lesson in penitence; women who followed in our Lord's company.* This section is peculiar to Luke; for parallel incidents, see notes on Matthew 26.1-16, and John 12.1-8. That the incident here described is the same as that described by the other Evangelists as taking place in Holy Week, is a view which has little to recommend it. There is a difference of date; there is a difference of scene (Luke gives no indication that we have left Galilee); there is a difference of



events (the anointing here is only incidental); most important of all, a quite different moral is drawn from the facts. Against this nothing can be set except coincidences of detail. On either occasion, the host is called Simon, but it was a very common name. On either occasion the same words are used for "pot of ointment", but this may be due to mere unconscious reminiscence. Why, then, does Luke omit all mention of the anointing in Holy Week, if the two episodes were wholly distinct? Probably because he *had no means of making sure* that they were wholly distinct. (In the same way, it was suggested above that Luke omitted the call of the Apostles in Mark 1.16-20 because he was not certain that it was distinct from his own narrative in 5.1-9.) To reduplicate is a more serious fault in the historian than to omit.

If we believe that there were two different events, are we bound to conclude that there were two different heroines? Not necessarily; the Christian tradition is, on the whole, in favour of identification, and the present passage forms the gospel for St. Mary Magdalen's feast. And we make less demand on coincidence, if we suppose that the scene in Holy Week was a deliberate reconstruction, made by the person chiefly concerned, of that described in Luke 7. Meanwhile, it is curious to note that St. Mary Magdalen comes into Luke's story for the first time in the next verse of his narrative but one. It is at least a plausible suggestion that verses 1-3 of chapter 8 follow on verses 36-50 of chapter 10 precisely because association was at work, consciously or unconsciously, in the mind of the Evangelist. That St. Mary Magdalen's name should be suppressed in chapter 7 need occasion no surprise; she is equally anonymous in the description of Holy Week as given by Matthew and Mark (see notes on Matthew).

The story is somewhat breathlessly told; the Pharisee, who has been anonymous in verses 36 and 39, suddenly acquires a name in verses 40, 43 and 44; at the beginning of verse 41 there is no rubric to mark the change of speaker. There is a certain awkwardness, too, in the run of the last three sentences of the chapter. It is as if, for some reason, the passage had not been very carefully worked over. This should perhaps be borne in mind when we are considering the vexed question of verse 47.

Does this verse mean that man's love is the motive of God's forgive-

ness, or that God's forgiveness is the motive of man's love? The older and simpler explanation is that which lies on the surface: "Her many sins have been forgiven her, for the reason that she has loved much". But how can this explanation be reconciled with the context? The second half of the verse does not say, as we should have expected, "He who loves little, has little forgiven him"; it says "He who has little forgiven him, loves little". And the parable is concerned, not with a money-lender who remitted a great debt because the client treated him so lovingly, but with a money-lender who won his client's love by remitting a great debt. In a word, the context demands that verse 47 should be read, somehow, the other way round. It must mean, somehow, that the woman is already forgiven, and knows it; that is the *explanation* of her gesture and of her gift.

Some modern editors, accordingly, propose the interpretation, "She has loved much (as you see), and that is my ground for informing you that her many sins must have been forgiven"—i.e., she could not be so loving unless she were pardoned already. What has won her pardon, they tell us, is faith (cf. verse 50), not precisely love. But this explanation does violence to the whole structure of the sentence. If our Lord *had already said* "She is forgiven" and then added "Look how loving she is, that is why I am telling you she is forgiven", it would have been well enough; cf. John 6.66, 16.15. But the fact of the penitent's forgiveness *has not yet been announced*; the operative verb is therefore "have been forgiven her", and "I tell thee" is merely parenthetical—which is fatal to the theory under discussion.

We might, indeed, suppose the sentence to mean, "Many sins have been forgiven her, that she should love so much" (i.e., if you want to know why she loves so much); this is the construction in John 2.18 and perhaps in John 9.17, the "epexegetic" construction. But the text, it must be observed, does not say "Many sins have been forgiven her"; it says "her many sins have been forgiven her", which ruins (on this shewing) the emphasis. We are thus driven to re-examine the plain surface meaning, "Her many sins have been forgiven her because she loved much", and read it in a light which will make it harmonize with its context.

The mistake we make is to suppose that *gratitude for sin forgiven* is in question; but it is not that, it is *consciousness of sin needing to be*

*forgiven* that is really in our Lord's mind. To be sure, the parable sits loosely to its application, as our Lord's parables often do. In the parable, the remission of the debt is a *fait accompli*, and the love is explained by gratitude for an act of grace already in being. But in the application, there is no *fait accompli*; the forgiveness is not conveyed till verse 48. The penitent's gesture is not one of gratitude for an act of grace already in being, but one of confident hope in an act of grace which lies in the future. Because the Pharisee has little consciousness of need, he loves little; because the Magdalen has great consciousness of need, she loves much. And because her love (or her faith, which you will) is so great, she will find pardon, like the Prodigal Son, like the Publican in the temple; whereas for Simon, with his little love, there is little forgiveness to expect.

This seems, on the whole, to be the most satisfactory explanation of a passage which still presents difficulties, however interpreted. The rendering "If . . . she has also" is meant to allow for diversities of view on the subject.

It is evident that the first three verses of chapter 8 have been included here for convenience, although they might have been included almost anywhere else. It seems best to conclude that the mention of the penitent woman put Luke in mind of Christ's companions; naturally if the first named of them was herself the penitent. For the "many others", cf. Matthew 27:55.

8.4-21. *The Parable of the Sower, and certain detached sayings.* For the parable, see notes on Matthew 13.1-23. Luke follows his predecessors closely, though he lends a theological touch, occasionally, to the language used; Satan takes away the word "so that they cannot find faith and be saved", and the rock-surface Christians "apostatize" instead of being "scandalized". What is more difficult to explain is Luke's total disregard, both in verse 8 and in verse 15, of the gradations in productivity, recorded by Matthew in a descending and by Mark in an ascending scale. Why was Luke uninterested in the difference between a hundredfold, a sixtyfold and a thirtyfold crop in Christian lives? At first sight it looks as if he was afraid of our Lord's parable being exploited in the interests of Pelagianism, suggesting as it does that

productivity is determined entirely by the soil, not by the seed. But the Parable of the Pounds (19.12 sqq.) evinces just the opposite tendency; whereas Matthew's investors (Matthew 25.14 sqq.) exactly double the capital entrusted to each, Luke's investors receive the same amount of capital and lay it out with varying success—as if Luke, here, feared that the parable would be exploited in the interests of Calvinism. Presumably his attention was caught, not by the list of variations in the crop, but by the high maximum achieved, and he was content to lay emphasis on this.

Luke follows Mark in his rather disjointed arrangement of material at the end of this parable (see notes on Mark 4.21-25). Then, unexpectedly, he includes our Lord's utterance about his "mother" and his "brethren", which is given by Matthew (12.46) and by Mark (3.31) as an appendix to the argument about Satan casting out Satan. This argument comes much later in Luke (11.14 sqq.) after the Transfiguration, with a somewhat similar appendix of its own. Luke seems to be deliberately correcting his predecessors at this point; see notes on Luke 11.14-28. Luke, then, will have had private sources of information, and he preferred to follow these rather than the common tradition. The common tradition was in fact fuller; it tells us that our Lord looked round at his immediate disciples when he said "those who hear the word of God" (Matthew 12.49).

8.22-56. *Crossing the Lake; the storm and the exorcism; Jairus' daughter and the issue of blood.* See notes on Matthew 8.18-34, Mark 4.35-5.53. Luke follows Mark in detail, both as to the order of events, and in the facts he narrates. It is possible that he has added some touches from private information, but it looks rather as if he had simply re-told Mark's story in his own way. He omits Mark 5.26, with its implied strictures on the medical profession; a circumstance which helps to verify him as the "beloved physician" of Col. 4.14. It also throws an interesting side-light on the conditions under which the scriptural authors worked. Divine inspiration does not iron out their personal characteristics; and Luke feels that he has sufficiently emphasized the importance of the miracle by what he says in verse 42, without the need of holding up his own art to contempt.



9.1-6. *The Apostles sent out; terms of their mission.* See notes on Matthew 10.5-15. It seems fairly clear that our Lord's instructions to missionaries were preserved in two forms, one of which is represented by Matthew (as above) and the other by Mark (6.8-11). Luke has preserved both; on the whole, he follows Mark here, and Matthew in 10.4-11, where our Lord is addressing, not the Twelve, but the seventy disciples whom he sent out later on a similar errand. The special problems created by this treatment will be considered below (see notes on Luke 10.1-20). For our present purposes, it must be observed that Luke does not follow Mark absolutely, even in chapter 9. There were two apparent inconsistencies between the earlier accounts (see notes on Mark 6.7-13). In Matthew, the Apostles are forbidden to *have in their possession* a (second) pair of shoes; in Mark, they may *take for their journey* a (single) pair of shoes. In Matthew, they are forbidden to *have in their possession* a (treasured) walking-stick; in Mark, they may *take for their journey* a walking-stick (cut at random, no doubt, from the hedgerow). Luke avoids the former of these embarrassments by omitting all mention of sandals (but cf. 10.4 below); in the matter of the staff, he follows Matthew, and indeed makes the injunction even stricter—the Apostle is not even to *take up* a staff for his journey. Possibly Luke doubted the accuracy of the text of Mark which had come into his hands. At any rate it seems clear that he was comparing two documents, and that he preferred in this case the authority of the Matthaean tradition. (A close examination of the Greek words used confirms the impression that Luke was combining two sources.)

9.7-17. *Miracle of the Five Thousand.* See notes on Matthew 14.13-21, Mark 6.30-56, John 6.1-14. "A desert place in the Bethsaida country" is probably not the true reading in verse 10. The best manuscripts have "to a city called Bethsaida", and there are several other variants. It is evident not only from the accounts given elsewhere, but from verse 12 just below, that the scene of the miracle was somewhere in the open country, though there were villages in the neighbourhood. It is unlikely, therefore, that Luke wrote "to a city called Bethsaida"; the true reading will have been obscured by some early mistake on the part of a copyist. But if "Bethsaida" actually

figured in it, the reference is probably to Bethsaida Julias, a town of some importance just outside Galilee, which owed allegiance not to Herod Antipas, but to his brother Philip, the real husband of Herodias. Thus, by inference, Luke seems to bear out Matthew's implication that our Lord left Galilee so as to avoid the unwelcome attentions of Herod. But so far is Luke himself from suggesting any connexion of the kind that (unlike Mark) he does not even mention the death of St. John the Baptist in this context. See further, notes on John 6.15-25.

At this point in his narrative Luke suddenly abandons the tradition of Mark, which he has followed so closely up till now. He goes on immediately to St. Peter's Confession (Mark 8.27), omitting all mention of our Lord's walking on the water, of the long dispute with the Pharisees about ceremonial traditions, of the Syrophenician woman and the deaf-mute in Decapolis, of the second multiplication of loaves and the conversation which followed, and of the blind man healed at Bethsaida. All these passages, except for the healing of the deaf mute and of the blind man, have been as carefully chronicled by Matthew as by Mark, and in the same order. What account is to be given of Luke's silence?

It seems highly improbable that Luke had an incomplete copy of Mark in front of him. Accidental mutilation would be unlikely, in the case of a rare and highly treasured document. Nor is there any evidence that Mark ever existed in a shorter and a longer form. It looks more as if a deliberate "cut" had been made, for some editorial reason which we can only guess at. Hitherto, except for the story of the Infancy, Luke has for the most part been covering familiar ground; he has still much in store which has not been preserved for us by the other Evangelists, and he may have wanted to observe a certain proportion between things new and old. Or he may have been anxious to stress, by giving it fuller treatment, the closing period of our Lord's ministry, when hostility had begun to shew itself more openly, and the circumstances of the Passion were being foretold. For some such reason, Luke may have decided to abbreviate his material. If we have to invoke the hypothesis of faulty transmission, we cannot exclude the possibility that there is a gap, here, in the original text of Luke himself.

9.18-27. *The Confession of St. Peter; the Passion foretold; a call to renunciation.* See notes on Matthew 16.13-28. Luke's rubric is somewhat obscure; Mark had told us that the question was asked "on the way" to Caesarea Philippi, as if in the course of ordinary conversation, but Luke seems to hint at a more solemn occasion. Our Lord was praying "alone"; that is, presumably, away from the crowds. His disciples "were with him"; an alternative reading, rare but apparently ancient, is "met him", but it can hardly be right—the verb implies that the person who is met is himself in motion. Unless, then, "praying" is a copyist's slip for "journeying", Luke perhaps means us to understand that our Lord retired specially to pray, in view of a new departure; a new phase, anyhow, in the education of his Apostles. Cf. 6.12 above.

Luke omits, after verse 22, the protest made by St. Peter and the rebuff which followed it. Presumably, having determined to imitate Mark in leaving out the promise made in Matthew 16.18, he thought it best to leave out what was obviously the second half of the story. It is difficult to believe that Luke is responsible for the harsh syllepsis of verse 26, "in his own glory and that of his father and that of the holy angels". "His Father's glory" is a genitive of origin; "the glory of his angels" is one of attendant circumstances. It looks like a mere error of transmission; contrast the plain statement in Matthew and Mark. In verse 27 the allusion to a Second Coming is less definite than in Matthew, or even in Mark; but it would be difficult to understand Luke's phrase merely of Pentecost, since *all* the Apostles (except Judas) lived to see that event.

The rubric at the beginning of verse 23 is perhaps meant to obviate a difficulty suggested by Mark 8.34. How could there be a "multitude" to be called in, when our Lord and his Apostles were on their way to Caesarea Philippi, miles away from Jewish territory? Luke prefers to tell us that the utterance, although made to the Apostles on this occasion, had been more than once on our Lord's lips (compare Matthew 16.24 with Matthew 10.38).

9.28-45. *The Transfiguration; the lunatic boy; fresh prophecy of the Passion.* Like the other two Synoptists, Luke places the Transfiguration just after St. Peter's Confession, but his account is plainly individual—

it somehow creates a different *impression* from the Matthew-Mark account, although the variations in the narrative, taken by themselves, are slight. There is no "high mountain" specially chosen; our Lord simply goes up to the mountain-side to pray. The Apostles, as in Gethsemani, are sunk in sleep; was it night? There is no suggestion of that outside Luke. The actual phenomenon of Transfiguration was not, apparently, witnessed by Peter, James and John; they only woke up to find our Lord's appearance already changed, the conversation already in progress. Luke alone tells us that Moses and Elias talked to our Lord about his Passion; and it even seems to be insinuated that this took place while the chosen witnesses were still asleep. This would mean that it was our Lord himself who disclosed, afterwards, the full extent of what had happened, just as he must have disclosed the full story of Gethsemani (and, for that matter, of the Temptation). It is difficult not to feel that Luke, here, has personal sources of information which fill out, to a very considerable extent, the somewhat meagre account which had passed into common tradition. We shall find, later, that we have to say exactly the same about Luke's account of Gethsemani. Unless we are prepared to refuse him all credit as a historian, we have to admit (i) that his narrative depends, ultimately, upon the testimony of our Lord himself, and (ii) that there is a kind of prearranged harmony between the Transfiguration and the Agony which goes beyond mere coincidence.

"Eight days" evidently stands, as in French, for a week (cf. John 20.26), and is not therefore inconsistent with the "after six days" of Matthew and Mark. "The mountain-side" almost necessarily points to mount Hermon, not mount Thabor in Galilee, as the scene of the event, unless we suppose a return to Galilee which Luke does not mention (see notes on Matthew 16.24-28). Thabor, however, is indicated by tradition. "Moses and Elias" is literally, in Luke's account, "who were (in fact) Moses and Elias", which may suggest that their identity was disclosed to the Apostles afterwards by our Lord himself; in verse 32 it is simply "two men" who are the subject of the vision. It is noticeable that Luke (verse 37) speaks of coming down from the mountain "next day", which lends some confirmation to the idea that the Transfiguration happened at night.



Luke has preserved no record of the conversation on the mountain-side; perhaps he thought it would have no great interest for his Gentile readers. He also omits our Lord's complaint (Matthew 17.19) about the Apostles' want of faith, presumably because he has preserved the utterance in another context (17.6 below). In describing the miracle of the Lunatic Boy he is perhaps simply abbreviating Mark; though the word "misguided" in verse 41 (cf. Matthew 17.16) suggests that he is doing what he seldom does—checking Mark's story by the tradition which is preserved in Matthew. For verse 44 see notes on Mark 9.30.

9.46–62. *Various sayings.* See (in part) notes on Matthew 8.18–34, 18.1–14, Mark 9.33–50. Luke reproduces, but abbreviates, the curious mosaic of apparently disconnected sayings which occur in Matthew and Mark at this point. He follows Mark, not Matthew; the story of the man who tried to cast out devils in our Lord's name is recorded, but without its difficult clause. Probably by way of comparison, Luke adds at this point the anecdote of Zebedee's sons wanting to call down fire from heaven. The anecdote does not occur in any other Gospel. Even in Luke, its text is not easy to determine; the second part of verse 55 and the first part of verse 56 are wanting in the best manuscripts, and some manuscripts (but not the best) add "as Elias did" after "come down from heaven" in verse 54.

Whether the words "as Elias did" are genuine or not, remains uncertain, and does not greatly signify. The other variation is of much greater interest, since it proves that the reading given by the best manuscripts of the New Testament is not necessarily the right reading. The suggestion that verses 55 and 56 ought to run simply "But he turned and rebuked them; and so they passed on to another village" is grotesque. Literary considerations here are decisive; the anecdote, so read, is not an anecdote; if there had been no record of what our Lord *said*, the story would not have been told at all. At some very early period, there must have been some tear in a manuscript, some accidental omission; and it might have been necessary, for all time, to print three dots at the end of verse 54, in apology for the obvious lacuna. But fortunately the missing reply was preserved, probably not in Greek but in a translation, and it begins to reappear in important manuscripts

of the ninth and tenth centuries. "He said, You do not understand whose spirit it is (people like) you share. (For) the Son of Man has come to save (men's) lives, not to destroy them"—the bracketed words occur in one manuscript, not in another, because the sentence has had to be retranslated. But there is no doubt about the sentiment, and it carries its own warrant of authenticity with it. There has been no borrowing from other passages, and the words have been accepted, for centuries, as worthy of Christ. The best manuscript tradition can be wrong. Very likely the words "But he turned and rebuked them" were not written by Luke; they may have been inserted, as a rather clumsy makeshift, to fill up the gap left by the omission. "What spirit it is" perhaps conveys an implied reference to IV Kings 2.9; cf. verse 51 above.

Luke adds three utterances of our Lord about half-hearted discipleship; two of them have been given by Matthew (8.18-22), while the last is peculiar to this Gospel.

10.1-16. *Mission of the seventy (or seventy-two) disciples.* See, in part, notes on Matthew 10 and 11. There is much in Luke 10-19 which only Luke has preserved; but no omission on the part of the other two Synoptic Gospels is as remarkable as that of the present passage. The difference is really one of perspective. Matthew and Mark, inspired by fresh memories of the Apostolic circle, have concentrated their attention, more than we knew, on certain aspects of our Lord's career. They have represented him, first and foremost, as the Master of twelve specially favoured disciples, who were allowed to know his intimate thoughts when the rest of the world had to be content with parables. Luke, coming late to the business of authorship, with more of the historian's detachment, is interested in the outer ring of "disciples" which gathered round that central nucleus. After all, even in Jerusalem the Church numbered a hundred and twenty, not just twelve, before Pentecost. Coming late in the Ministry, this mission of the Seventy may not have produced much in the way of permanent results. But to Luke, who perhaps had the design of the Acts already in his mind, everything which foreshadowed future organization of the Church seemed worth recording.

Our Lord, who consistently followed the Mosaic pattern, no doubt had in mind the appointment of the elders by Moses (Num. 11). It is not quite clear, in that passage, whether the elders were seventy in all, or whether we should include Eldad and Medad, giving a ratio of six elders to each tribe. This doubt is possibly reflected in the manuscript variation between "seventy" and "seventy-two" in verse 1 here; it is difficult to be certain of the true reading. The directions given are much the same as those given to the Twelve at the beginning of chapter 9 above; no doubt our Lord laid down the same rules on either occasion, and it is possible besides that Luke may have preserved in this context sayings which belonged to the other—thus we may compare verse 2 with Matthew 9.37, verse 6 with Matthew 10.12, verse 12 with Matthew 10.15. Verses 13-15 are given as an isolated saying by Matthew (11.20), and were perhaps included here because Matthew's mention of Sodom formed a link. The prohibition of sandals, omitted by Luke in 9.3, occurs here; but the word "carry" implies that a second pair of sandals is meant.

10.17-24. *Return of the Seventy; with certain detached sayings.* See, in part, notes on Matthew 11.25-30. Verse 18 is most naturally understood of a vision which presented itself to our Lord's interior view at the time when the Seventy were at work; but the reference of it is not simply to their ministry, rather to the triumph of the Church, viewed generally, over her spiritual enemies. Thus verse 20 should not be taken as a specific promise of predestination to a particular set of people. Our Lord is simply repeating in another form the warning which he had given in Matthew 7.22, the warning which his Apostle was to give in I Cor. 13.1 and 2—that all the *gratiae gratis datae* will not compensate for the lack of charity.

The remaining four verses of this passage are to be found in two different contexts in Matthew, 11.25-27 and 13.16-17. There is no doubt that Matthew gives the former utterance a more natural setting; what is hidden from the wise and prudent is the lesson which ought to have been conveyed by our Lord's miracles, whereas "all this" in Luke has the vaguest possible reference. Similarly Matthew 13.16, with its emphatic "But blessed are *your* eyes", fits into the argument without

difficulty, whereas in Luke there is no obvious reason why our Lord should break off his conversation with the Seventy to address a remark (which might have been equally made at any other time) to the Twelve. It looks, therefore, as if Luke 10.17-20 should be treated as a parenthesis, and verse 21 should be taken closely with the Chorozain-Bethsaida context, as in Matthew. Verses 23 and 24 will have been known to Luke merely as an isolated utterance, which he fitted in here because it matched the reference to "revelation" in verse 22. Luke, as usual, gives us the impression that he was not familiar with Matthew's Gospel, so far as its structure was concerned, but had access to some catena of Divine utterances which was either extracted from Matthew's Gospel, or used in the compiling of it.

10.25-37. *The Good Samaritan.* Verses 25-28 bear a close resemblance to Matthew 22.35-40, Mark 12.28-32. It is not likely that the occasion was the same, but it may be that Luke has incorporated here some of the dialogue which really belongs to the Day of Questions in Holy Week. It was natural enough that some lawyer, upon any or no pretext, should say to our Lord, "Rabbi, how do you explain the word *neighbour* in Leviticus 19.18?" The verb used at the beginning of verse 30 does not mean simply that our Lord answered him; our Lord "took him up"—pounced on his question as a peg on which he could hang the world's greatest story. The Fathers, with remarkable unanimity, give the parable an allegorical as well as a practical application. The traveller is human nature, partly stripped and partly wounded by the Fall; Levitical sacrifices are powerless to bring aid, but our Lord, the Good Samaritan, rescues and restores him. The circumstance that a priest and a Levite, not, as we might expect, a scribe and a Pharisee, pass by ineffectually, suggests in any case that the parable was meant to bear this interpretation, although we cannot be certain how much our Lord meant the details of the story to be significant.

10.38-42. *Martha and Mary.* This anecdote is only found in Luke. The two sisters reappear, with their brother Lazarus, in John 11 and 12. That Mary of Bethany was identical with St. Mary Magdalen, seems the most probable opinion; it has the balance of Christian tradition behind



it, and if we hold (cf. notes on 7.36-8.3) above that the heroine of Luke 7 is also the heroine of John 12, the case for identification becomes somewhat stronger. The case against it depends on a bare argument from silence, perhaps reinforced by a wrong-headed reluctance to see the penitent in the contemplative. St. Mary Magdalen is described in the collect for her feast as having prayed for the resuscitation of "her brother" Lazarus.

In verse 42 the predicament of 9.55 is repeated; the reading which has the best attestation in the manuscripts is unmanageable. It runs thus: "But there is need for a few things or for one; for Mary has chosen . . .", etc. From the literary point of view, this is already intolerable. Can we really believe our Lord meant "You are taking trouble about a lot of different dishes, but a few dishes would have been enough, or even one"? The flatness of the comment is bad enough in itself; what makes it worse is that the transition to the second half of the sentence is intolerably elliptic: "A few dishes would have been enough, or even one; (and if you had been content with a few dishes, you would not have needed the help of Mary. In point of fact) Mary has chosen for herself the best part of all . . ." The word "for" has to disappear; it is, on this shewing, wholly out of place. Commentators explain that Mary's "part" means Mary's "dish", so dishes do come into it after all. Yes, but with how much of bathos! And where is the logical sequence of the sentiment "You are giving me a lot of dishes instead of a few, for Mary has chosen the best dish of all"?

Meanwhile, the rendering thus offered to us is not even Greek. In Greek, as in English, it is one thing to say "We need a few things", and quite another thing to say "We *only* need a few things". In order to give the sense required, the sentence would have had to run "But there is no need except of a few things, or even of one". As it runs in the text, it can only mean "But there is (still) need of a few things, or (anyhow) of one"—which is a quite different proposition.

Probably the text has suffered from a very early corruption. If the reading which the Latin follows is not original, at least it must be a well-inspired correction. Our Lord seems to have told Martha that one thing was still lacking about her entertainment of him—that receptivity which was Mary's contribution. Whether we regard that as something

Mary received, or something Mary gave, matters little; by a paradox of the spiritual life, it was both.

11.1-13. *On the prayer of petition.* For the text of the Pater noster, cf. notes on Matthew 6.1-18. Luke differs from Matthew more than is usual when they are covering the same ground, but there is nothing surprising in this. Either Evangelist would naturally write down the prayer in the liturgical form in which it was familiar to him; and it seems that there must have been two Greek versions of the Aramaic original already current. That Luke should omit the final petition which occurs in Matthew's version is less easily understood; but (i) in the circumstances, it would not be very surprising that our Lord should dictate a formula, with slight differences, on two separate occasions, and (ii) "deliver us from evil" is so much the converse of "lead us not into temptation", that the prayer might easily be abbreviated or expanded for liturgical purposes.

The parable of the Importunate Friend is peculiar to Luke, like that of the Unjust Judge (18.2 below). In either case, we must observe that our Lord, in some at least of his parables, is content to emphasize a single point of similarity between two situations, without suggesting that the two situations are really "on all fours". He will tell us to watch for his coming as if it were that of a thief in the night (12.39 below), not for the same reasons, but with the same untiring vigilance. And he will tell us to reiterate our prayers, as if Almighty God were a sleepy friend or an unscrupulous judge, not for the same reasons, but with the same untiring patience. "I cannot bestir myself" in verse 7 means, not that it is impossible, but that in the circumstances it would be unreasonable; cf. notes on Mark 6.5.

Verses 9-13 belong to the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew (7.7). The resemblance to Matthew is less close than usual, and some phrases rather suggest an independent translation from an Aramaic original.

11.14-36. *Can Satan cast out Satan? Dangers of a negative piety; the demand for a sign.* See notes on Matthew 12.22-50. Luke follows Matthew and Mark (3.20-27) closely enough till the end of verse 20; verse 21 covers the same ground, but the phrasing of it suggests an

independent source. Verses 24-26 do not differ by a single word from Matthew, though Luke puts them before, instead of after, the demand for a sign. At verse 27, we expect to find the saying about our Lord's "mother" and "brethren" as in the other two Gospels. But Luke has already given us that saying (8.19-21) and replaces it here—deliberately, it would seem—by a different saying which has the same general effect. Here, too, our Lord's point is that there is no principle of "Founder's kin" about his kingdom; spiritual, not natural, qualifications are the passport to it. Our Lord's answer to the woman does not tell her that she is wrong; the impression he gives is that of re-drafting the form of her utterance.

Verses 29-32 do not occur in Mark, and no doubt come from a separate document either based on, or used by, Matthew. But the verse (Matthew 12.40) which makes Jonas a symbol of the Resurrection has disappeared in Luke. Conceivably he suppressed it, on the ground that its curious Jewish reckoning of three days and three nights would be confusing to his Gentile readers. But more probably Luke gives us the true form of the utterance as it was made on this occasion, an utterance wholly cryptic; Matthew has included in his text an elucidation which our Lord only supplied later on. Verses 33-36 are a collection of stray sayings, perhaps included here so as to call attention to the blindness of the Jews in refusing a light denied to others (cf. John 9.41). See Matthew 5.15 and 6.22; verse 36 is peculiar to Luke.

This verse is not necessarily part of what our Lord said; it may be only an explanatory note by the author, to bring out our Lord's meaning. If so, it has failed of its purpose; few verses have been so much discussed, and with so little profit. The literal sense of the Greek is: "If therefore thy whole body is lightsome, having no part darksome, thy whole body will be lightsome, as when the lamp lightens thee with its flashing". The tautology is obvious, nor can we really get rid of it by underlining one phrase in the first part of the sentence and another in the second, by way of marking a different emphasis. Suspicion has arisen, therefore, about the genuineness of the text. If we are to alter the text, we can perhaps do so with least disturbance if we suppose that Luke did not write the word "lightsome" twice over, but used two different words, only distinguished from one another by a single

letter. One ought to mean "made of light", the other "full of light". The sense would thus be, "If thy whole body is *photinon*, made of light—that is, connatural to the light and sympathetic to its influence—the whole of it will be *photeinon*, full of light—actually lighted up by the presence of the lamp without". The sentence is better rounded off, if we suppose that by some error of reduplication our text reads "as when" instead of a plain "when". Only in so far as it is capable of absorbing the light does a body become luminous.

11.37-53. *Denunciation of the Pharisees and lawyers.* See notes on Matthew 23.14-36. There is a general resemblance here between Matthew and Luke, but it is so faint that they evidently have no documentary source in common. They will have been based on two independent reports of the same conversation (or series of conversations); the turn of phrase, the particular illustration, which has impressed one auditor has passed almost unnoticed by the other—just as we should expect. It is quite possible that the whole of Matthew 23.14-36 is derived from this interview at the Pharisee's table; more probably, two different conversations have cross-fertilized one another, both in Matthew and Luke. The rubric at the beginning of verse 37 appears to connect this section with the foregoing; but it is quite general in form, "at the time of his speaking", and may for all we know have been imported from some other context.

According to the Greek text, verse 41 probably means, "Nay, you should give away in charity that which is inside (the cup and the dish) . . .", etc. Verse 44 is curious, especially if we put it side by side with Matthew 23.27. But the two illustrations might well be used as alternatives. To touch a grave meant defilement (Num. 19.16); it must be white-washed, to make it more conspicuous. Where this precaution was observed, you might exclaim, from a distance, at some shining piece of rock, only find on nearer view that it was a sepulchre. Where it was neglected, you might tread on a man's grave and incur defilement without being any the wiser. The sense of verse 48 is possibly (see notes on Matthew) that the same narrow conservatism which led to tomb-building in A.D. 30 had led to prophet-murdering in 800 B.C. (In verse 51 the reference is presumably to II Paralip. 24.22; if Luke found



the confusing identification "son of Barachias" in his authorities, he may well have omitted it through doubt of its accuracy.)

The rubric of verse 49 is a well-known puzzle; nothing like it occurs in Matthew (23.34), where, however, the form of words does suggest a quotation from the Old Testament. But there is no such quotation to be found in the Old Testament; if we interpret "the wisdom of God" in that sense, we must suppose an Old Testament passage which has been accidentally lost. "The Wisdom of God" is not the title of any book, as far as our information goes. Meanwhile, it is in the highest degree improbable that our Lord referred to himself here (and here only) as "the Wisdom of God". It is not, however, impossible that he may have been referred to by that title in some early collection of his sayings; I Cor. 1.24 may have been the origin of it. And it is not, perhaps, altogether impossible that Luke, in making use of such a collection, should accidentally include the rubric, "Thus spoke the Wisdom of God", as if it were part of the quotation. The use of the word "apostles" in verse 49 (though it can be justified on the ground that the word only means "emissaries") might suggest that Luke's source had given an up-to-date twist to the phrase our Lord used in Matthew 23.34. As it stands, the phrase can be taken (and may have been taken by Luke) as a mere expression of the Divine decree; in Hebrew, a "word said" may be no more than a thought in the mind. "Therefore it was that God's Providence determined to send them prophets and apostles" will, in that case, be the general sense.

12.1-12. *An exhortation to boldness in professing Christ.* See notes on Matthew 10.16-42. The passage is a selection from the sayings which are recorded by Matthew in connexion with the sending out of the Apostles; Luke adds nothing, though he expands the thought here and there. Curiously, he has included one saying which evidently belongs to a different context; the warning about "blaspheming against the Holy Spirit" is expressly associated by Mark (3.30) with the attribution of our Lord's miracles to Beelzebub, and we can hardly doubt that it really belongs there (cf. notes on Matthew 12.22-32). No plausible reason has been suggested why Luke should have put it

in here. Is it possible that, in some catena of utterances which Luke was using, Matthew 10.32, 33 and Matthew 12.31, 32 were put side by side to illustrate the doctrine of the Blessed Trinity?

Meanwhile, the rubric in verse 1 seems to have little connexion with what follows. Quite clearly, it has no connexion with the end of chapter 11; our Lord had been addressing a private audience, and although the Pharisees were bitterly alienated, there is no suggestion that they contemplated anything like mob violence. Probably, then, this verse looks back to 11.29; there, the crowds were gathering, here, they are gathering in numbers difficult to control—in a word, our Lord is experiencing a crescendo of popularity. And this fact, no doubt lends emphasis to what he says in verse 2. The movement which he means to inaugurate is not a secret cabal, on the Pharisaic model; it is for the light of day.

12.13-34. *On worldly cares; with the parable of the Rich Fool.* See notes on Matthew 6.19-34. Verses 13-21 are peculiar to Luke, who uses them, tellingly enough, as a preface to what our Lord says in the Sermon on the Mount about worldly cares. There are indications which point to an Aramaic original; e.g., the use of "soul" in verse 19 for "appetite" . . . Luke uses the word "parable" in a somewhat wider sense than the other Synoptists; the story of the Rich Fool is in fact a pulpit anecdote rather than a parable—there is no comparing of *this* with *that*. The remaining verses of the section follow Matthew closely, except verses 32 and 33, which are not found elsewhere.

12.35-48. *The duty of watchfulness.* See, in part, notes on Matthew 24.36-51. Matthew has concentrated all our Lord's teaching about vigilance into a single whole, and appended it to the great prophecy made shortly before the Passion. Luke has detached part of it, and includes it here; evidently he does not feel that he is changing the subject, or he would have given us a fresh rubric. Part of the reason why Christians ought to travel light in this world is that they are always expecting world-catastrophe (cf. Matthew 24.17, 18). It is not important to know when, exactly, our Lord uttered this or that warning

about such things; whether, on this or that occasion, he had the fall of Jerusalem, or the end of the world, or world-catastrophes of all sorts, directly in mind; the same principles apply in each case.

The greater part of verses 35-38 is peculiar to Luke; verse 38 was perhaps specially worth remembering in view of the growing impatience of certain Christians about the postponement of "the Lord's coming" (cf. II Thessalonians and II Peter). The question put in verse 41 receives no direct answer, though verses 47 and 48 supply one by inference. If it is a coincidence, it is a very curious one, that the direct answer is supplied in Mark 13.37, where the question is not asked. Verses 42-46 follow Matthew closely; verses 47 and 48 (Luke only) do not necessarily belong to this context. We cannot, therefore, be certain that our Lord had Purgatory directly in mind, though what he says here is obviously relevant to that doctrine. In verse 46 "cut him off" seems to be the sense of the Latin, not "flay him".

12.49-59. *Various sayings remotely connected with the same subject.* Cf. notes on Matthew 5.17-26, 10.16-42, and 16.1-4; but Luke does not follow Matthew closely. The sayings in verses 49 and 50 are bafflingly obscure. The Latin translators have either followed some lost manuscript tradition, or used considerable liberty in their rendering. In the Greek, verse 49 runs "It is a fire that I have come to spread over the earth, and what do I wish if it has been (or, conditionally, had been) already lit?" Some commentators break up the second part of the sentence thus: "And what do I wish? Oh that it had been already lit!" The form of the sentence resembles John 12.27, with which the sentiment has much in common—though that passage is almost as difficult as this. Others, allowing for a harshness of construction which is not in Luke's manner, suppose a translation from an Aramaic original which meant "And how greatly I wish, *Oh that it had been already lit!*" So understood, verse 49 finds an echo in verse 50; but surely, so understood, it disconcerts us by heightening the effect of verse 50. Does not the whole passage, so read, suggest something like a want of resignation, which is never traceable in our Lord's language elsewhere?

The alternative is to translate the words according to their more obvious meaning: "And what (more) do I wish, if it has already been

lit?" This means understanding "more" from the context; unless (as might very easily happen in Greek) the word "yet" has dropped out after the word "what". Meanwhile, what is the "fire" our Lord refers to? "Persecution" is the answer commonly given; in verse 50 our Lord is evidently speaking of his Passion, and it is natural to assume that he is speaking of it in verse 49 too. But is this a safe argument, in view of Luke's habits of composition? The two verses may belong to entirely different contexts, and have been ranged together here precisely because there was a superficial resemblance about the rhetoric of them. It certainly seems a rather forced statement. Our Lord has come to "cast" a sword on the earth (Matthew 10.34), but it is a sword of division. Did he really say that he had come to "cast" persecution on the earth? It seems safer to quote 3.16 above, and understand the "fire" of that zeal which does, indeed, draw down persecution on itself, but is compared to fire because it warms, not because it destroys. It will be remembered that the verse is used with this signification in the office of the Sacred Heart.

In that case, verse 50 and verse 51 follow here because their rhetoric is that of verse 49, not in the sense that they are mere restatements of it. The "baptism" which our Lord is to undergo is no doubt his Passion; as we have seen, he himself gave it the meaning of "initiation" elsewhere (cf. notes on Mark 10.32-52). He is impatient, he feels cramped, until that ordeal is over, surely because his baptism of blood is to result in a baptism of fire for his Apostles. But this, he goes on to warn them, will not be followed by a reign of universal peace, as they possibly imagined. Rather, the fire will have strength to dissolve the closest of bonds by its consuming influence.

It is sometimes objected that it would be an anachronism to describe the fire of heroic charity as "already lit" until after the Day of Pentecost. But we must not expect our Lord, in his intimate thoughts, to limit himself to our narrow time-perspectives; cf. notes on 10.18 above.

Verses 54 and following seem to be an independent *précis* of the same discourse which is summarized by Matthew (16.2). They are not connected with what goes before except by the reference, running all through this section, to a time of judgement. The same reference persists in verses 58 and 59; otherwise we should have to suppose that



Luke was guilty of a supreme irrelevance. Whatever we make of its significance in the Sermon on the Mount (see notes on Matthew 5.2-26), this utterance is not, in the present context, a mere exhortation to live peaceably with our neighbours. Our Lord is telling us that we must be beforehand with the Day of Judgement, anticipate its decrees by suitable action on our part, just as, in ordinary human affairs, a prudent man will settle disputes before they ever get into the law-courts. This is presumably the sense of verse 57; it has nothing to do with what precedes it. We are to be worldly-wise about the Second Coming as we would be about the threat of (say) a libel action; to "judge from your own experience" (literally, "judge from yourselves") is to apply the maxims of human prudence to divine things. Verse 59 will again remind us of Purgatory. But again we cannot be certain that Purgatory is meant; "until thou hast paid the last farthing" does not necessarily imply that the last farthing ever will be paid (cf. notes on Matthew 1.25).

13.1-9. *On the same subject; why God's judgements are delayed.* Only in Luke. We are accustomed to read a wrong emphasis into verses 1-5; their meaning seems to be, that God's judgements are inscrutable, and we must not be too ready to assume that he will, here on earth, punish the guilty and let the innocent go free. That is no doubt true, and no doubt it can be inferred from what our Lord says here; but it is not what our Lord is talking about. What he is saying is that these minor calamities are only a foretaste of the great calamity which is to befall the Jewish people, a calamity which can be averted only by national repentance. Verses 1-5 thus lead up to the parable of verses 6-8, exactly as the interruption in 12.13 above led up to the "parable" of the rich fool. The parable of the Fig-tree states clearly that the punishment of the Jews is long overdue; if it is still delayed, that is only because the vine-dresser (that is, our Lord himself) has interceded for a further period of grace.

Nothing is recorded in secular history about the tower of Siloe; nor (if we suppose that it was a recent event when our Lord spoke of it) about the massacre in Galilee. Yet the references here are plainly authentic; a warning that we must not always expect to find con-

firmation of the Gospel narrative in the writings of contemporary historians.

13.10-16. *A woman healed on the sabbath.* Luke only. "Some influence that disabled her" in verse 11 is literally "a spirit of powerlessness", which is sometimes taken to indicate that she was possessed by an evil spirit. This would fit in well with verse 16; but the mention of Satan does not necessarily imply diabolical possession. It may be that "spirit" is used as in Rom. 8.15 to describe a mental attitude—in this case a morbid attitude of hysteria, which kept the woman a cripple, although she suffered from no organic disability. Our Lord does not seem to treat her as a demoniac. The knowledge of her case-history which he shews in verse 16 was most probably of a supernatural kind; but such is their preoccupation with the moral issue in debate that both our Lord himself and his Evangelist seem to take the miracle for granted.

13.18-35. *A collection of unclassified sayings.* See notes on Matthew 13.31-35, 7.1-28, 23.37-39. The parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven seem to be included here as a kind of tail-piece to what has gone before; but the connexion is of the most general kind—our Lord points to the vitalizing influence of the gospel on the inert mass of Judaism, as illustrated by a new attitude towards the sabbath obligation. The Mustard Seed is given in Matthew's form, not in Mark's; the Leaven does not appear in Mark at all.

The rubric in verse 23 seems to imply that this is the true context of the saying about the Narrow Gate, which Matthew brings into the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 7.13). Verses 25-27, though the mention of a "door" gives a deceptive appearance of continuity, pass on to a different subject (cf. Matthew 7.21-23). The image is no longer that of a choice between two gateways, but that of a door which must be entered before it is too late. These two verses of Luke shew little verbal correspondence with Matthew, and it may be that we are dealing with two distinct utterances; one of which envisages erratic Christians, while the other is directed against self-satisfaction on the part of the Jews. Verses 28-30 (Matthew 8.11, 19.30) follow naturally enough.

Verses 31-33 are peculiar to Luke. It does not seem likely, in view of

Luke 23.8, that Herod had any intention of putting our Lord to death; no doubt the Pharisees invented the story, either by way of luring him into Judaea, or by way of inducing him to leave Palestine altogether. Our Lord takes the statement at its face value, but his answer is evidently meant for the Pharisees themselves. Enigmatic in form, this answer has been the subject of much discussion. Perhaps, since our Lord was on his way to Jerusalem (verse 22 above), the three "days" represent three stages of his journey: "To-day, I go on my journeys through Galilee, Herod's own sphere of influence; tomorrow, through Decapolis, which is neutral ground; on the third day, I shall be in Judaea, where my real enemies have influence. On the first two days, I shall continue my Messianic career of healing; on the third, my mission will be consummated. After all, it is in Jerusalem that prophets meet their end". Then follows, quite appropriately, the denunciation of Jerusalem which comes no less appropriately at the end of Matthew 23, almost without verbal difference.

14.1-24. *Conversation at the Pharisee's house; Parable of the Supper.* The whole section is peculiar to Luke. In verse 5, some of the best manuscripts read "son" instead of "ass", and it seems probable that "ass" is a mere correction. It does not follow that "son" is right, weakening as it does the whole rhetorical effect. It may be a guess for some illegible word in a very early copy of the Gospel. The two sections on humility and generosity are not connected with the miracle, nor with one another; the impression they give is that of consecutive reminiscence by someone who was present. Nor is there any reason to doubt that the conversation continued on the lines indicated in verse 15 onwards. The Parable of the Supper, though it resembles that of the Wedding Feast in Matthew, is no doubt a different piece of our Lord's teaching. We do not expect of any teacher that he shall never use the same illustration twice; cf. notes on Matthew 22.1-14. The verbal resemblances are very slight.

Yet it is fairly clear that this parable, like the parable of the Wedding Feast, has an inner meaning; and it is the same in both cases. Verses 15-24 are not a mere illustration of the principle laid down in verses 12-14. One of our Lord's fellow-guests has given a new twist to the

conversation by mentioning "the kingdom of God"; and in such a connexion, it is natural that we should scent an allegory. The guests originally invited will be the Jews, as the original heirs of God's promises; they are to be replaced in the kingdom of God, since they refuse to enter it, by the Gentiles whom they despise. These are represented alike by the city down-and-outs and by the tramps from the country-side; there is no reason to make any distinction between the two classes *in the application of the parable*. A distinction is introduced in the story itself, merely so that the host can reiterate his refusal to fall back on the friends originally invited; any sort of makeshift arrangement is better than that.

Evidently we are not to read verse 24 as implying that the kingdom of heaven was shut to all our Lord's fellow-countrymen, his Apostles included—any more than we are meant to regard the call of the Gentiles as a Divine afterthought (see Eph. 3.9). Here, as in several other parables, our Lord is content to emphasize one single point, and make all the details subservient to it. In its essence, the conversation runs on very simple lines. Encouraged by a reference to "the resurrection of the just" our Lord's fellow-guest observes, "How wonderful it will be when we all sit down to feast in the kingdom of God!" And the answer is, "Yes, but will it be you?"

14.25-35. *The cost of the kingdom*. Verse 26 finds a parallel (it is no more) in Matthew 10.37; but this parallel may help us to understand what is meant by "hating" those who are nearest to us. The verb which we render (under the influence of the Greek) "to hate" can bear, in Hebrew as in Latin, a much milder interpretation. To "hate" one's wife, in (e.g.) Deut. 24.3, is simply to have got tired of her; she no longer "finds favour in your eyes" (Deut. 24.1). And in Deut. 21.15 the sharp distinction drawn between the wife who is "loved" and the wife who is "hated" obviously means little more than that the husband prefers one to the other. In the present passage, too, the context makes it clear that a comparison is intended. You do not come to Christ as his disciple unless your approach involves preferring his claims to those of father or mother. It may assist the modern reader to be reminded that our Lord sometimes spoke almost paradoxically, or to be told that he



envisages only those parents who are coming between a man and his duty. But it is doubtful whether, when they were first spoken, the words needed so much in the way of interpretation.

The comparisons in verses 28-33 are quantitative, not qualitative. The man who lightly claims the position of a disciple, without considering what obligations it will involve, is *as foolish* as the builder of a "Folly" or the sabre-rattling diplomatist. His position is not comparable to theirs, or we should have to suppose that our Lord recommended, in certain circumstances, making terms with the devil. For verse 34, see Matthew 5.13, Mark 9.49.

15.1-32. *God's care for the outcast.* This chapter forms a single whole, providing three illustrations of the same principle. At first sight, it might appear that verses 4-7 had been wrested from a different context, that of Matthew 18.12-14. But on a closer view, it looks as if Luke's account were independent of Matthew, or of Matthew's sources. The verbal resemblances do not go beyond the bare constitutive elements of the story. "A man . . . a hundred sheep . . . one of them . . . the ninety-nine . . . and goes . . . and finds it . . . I tell you there will be joy . . . over . . . than over ninety-nine"—we should expect so much in the way of agreement if two different hands were reporting the same speech; or even if the same Teacher was using, more than once, the most touching of all his analogies. Matthew, if he had known of it, would not be likely to have left out the Lost Coin; he is fond of parables (cf. Matthew 13.31-33). And if he had read it in its present context, to which it so plainly belongs, he would not have been so unperceptive as to confuse God's care for the outcast with God's care for the insignificant; cf. notes on Matthew 18.1-14.

*We* read the parable as a gracious invitation to the individual penitent; but when it was first uttered it referred to a whole class of people who are designated (usually side by side with the publicans) as "sinners". The Jews of our Lord's time plainly used the word as practically a synonym for "Gentiles" (cf. 24.7 below, and Gal. 2.15). No doubt some of the people here alluded to were Jews who had lost caste by adopting unlawful professions; but in Pharisaic eyes they ranked as untouchable. It is fairly certain that the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, and

the Prodigal Son were representative, not only in our Lord's mind but in that of his audience, of those Gentiles who were beyond the pale of Judaism, but were to find a home in the Christian Church.

We are back, then, where we left off in verse 24 of the preceding chapter; the parable of the Supper is being repeated in a different form. And, as if deliberately, the doubt which the parable of the Supper left in our minds is cleared up. The Jewish people had been represented to us as churlish guests whose refusal to accept the invitation had excluded them, once for all, from the banquet. Now we see them represented by the elder son in his father's house, who is only excluded from the banquet by his own exclusiveness—his father actually pleads with him to come in (verses 25-32).

Verse 7 remains a difficulty. Probably we are not meant to stress the mathematics of the story, which would seem to imply that the conversion of a sinner is an extremely rare event; in the parable of the Prodigal Son, the proportions are evenly balanced. But, even if we set the numerical emphasis on one side, it surprises us to find penitence rated—it would seem—higher than innocence. In Matthew, the implications of the parable are quite different. The Lost Sheep does not represent the sinner, but the single insignificant soul for which divine Providence cares as much as for any of the others. Has Luke misread the meaning of the story? That is hardly possible; no Evangelist would have dared to invent so challenging a phrase as this. What, then, was our Lord's meaning? It seems safest to interpret him in the light of the sister parable which follows at the end of the chapter.

The essential point of the chapter is that the Pharisees must abandon their attitude of cold-shouldering the Gentiles, and rejoice, actually rejoice, that these too are to find a place in the kingdom. Unlike the shepherd in Matthew, the shepherd in Luke *calls in his friends* to rejoice with him; so, too, does the woman who has found her lost coin. When the Prodigal returns, there is merry-making (verse 24); the same verb is used of the redeemed Gentiles (Rom. 15.10, Gal. 4.27). And the elder son—this is really the crucial point of the story—refuses to take part in the rejoicing, on the explicit ground that, in all these years, no fattened calf has ever been killed for him. His father's reply in verses 31 and 32 gives the explanation of heaven's greater rejoicing

over the Prodigal. The redemption of the law-observing Jews is something which can be taken for granted; it is the uncovenanted mercy bestowed upon the Gentiles that causes, in heaven, a sudden thrill of exultation.

It is against that background that we must read verse 7. The "just persons who need no repentance" are the Jews as seen by themselves; whether their "justness" is worth having, our Lord does not stop to consider; his point is that, taken at its best, it has not the sensational quality of the free mercy which God is now bestowing on "those who were far off". No doubt the principle holds good wherever God's grace pardons the sinner; but there is no need to theologize about the value of penitence in general, or the possibility of "not needing" it. Our Lord is speaking to the Pharisees, and his language is strictly relevant to their immediate situation.

16.1-13, *Parable of the Dishonest Steward*. The rubric at the beginning of verse 1 ought to mean that our Lord is continuing to discuss the same subject, but with a different audience; cf. 12.22 above, 17.22 below. Unfortunately we cannot be certain that it is always used with so much precision; cf. 17.1, which marks a change not only of audience but of subject. If we trace any connexion of thought between the Prodigal Son and the Dishonest Steward, it will depend not on the moral lessons conveyed (which are wholly unrelated) but on their allegorical significance. Our Lord is foreshadowing, as so often, the call of the Gentiles. In speaking to the Pharisees, he represents the Jewish people under the image of the elder son, who must not grudge the prodigal his welcome home. Then, left alone with his disciples, under no necessity to spare anybody's feelings, he represents the Jewish people in a far less gracious light. They have been found unworthy of the trust reposed in them, and the old Covenant (the Steward's contract of employment) is due to be rescinded. Nothing remains for them but to make terms with the despised Gentiles, the overburdened tenants towards whom they have hitherto been so strict; it is with these that they must share, henceforward, the "everlasting habitation" of the Christian Church—"everlasting", because the new Covenant can never be rescinded.

We cannot be certain, however, that there is an internal connexion between chapter 15 and chapter 16; cannot be certain, therefore, that the parable of the Dishonest Steward has a Messianic interpretation at all. Meanwhile, it clearly has a moral interpretation; verses 10-12 seem to put that beyond doubt. And the moral interpretation is plain enough; we only make it difficult for ourselves by trying to read too much into the story. The parable is only meant to emphasize a single point—that we must make proper use of our worldly goods *while we have still time to do it*. (Cf. notes on 11.1-13 above.) Whether the steward, in remitting part of the debts owed, was robbing himself or his master; how much of irony there was in his master's commendation of these proceedings; how the steward hoped to make a permanent livelihood out of these acts of dishonesty—all that is simply part of the story, which may (for all we know) have been drawn from real life. The point is that the steward acted while there was still time to act, before the sentence of deprivation had taken effect. And his worldly wisdom ought to suggest a principle of other-worldly wisdom (cf. 12.57-59 above). We ought to make good use of our "base wealth" (verse 9) by acts of charity to the poor, the heirs of God's kingdom (6.20 above). When death comes, it will be too late. "His master" in verse 8 can alternatively be rendered "the Lord"; cf. 18.6 below.

Verses 10-12 may belong to a different occasion, but they belong to the same context. Not, indeed, that we are to go on thinking about the Dishonest Steward; we have finished with him. Our life here is a probation; only by making good use of God's blessings here can we shew ourselves worthy of his blessings hereafter. It would have been less confusing, perhaps, if Luke had inserted these verses after 19.26. Verses 13 and 14 correspond almost verbally with Matthew 6.24, a context in which they probably find their true setting.

16.14-31. *Dives and Lazarus*. The collection of sayings prefixed—deliberately, it would seem—to this parable seems curiously disconnected, even for Luke. Verses 14 and 15 are doubtless in their right context. But verse 16 appears to be a shortened, and therefore less enigmatic, form of Matthew 11.12 and 13; verse 17 has appeared in the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5.18) as part of its main structure;



and verse 18, even if it is not at home in Matthew 5.32, has a context of its own in Matthew 19.9, Mark 10.11. The only explanation seems to be that Luke wanted to prepare the reader's mind for the unexpected allusion to Moses and the prophets in verse 29. Accordingly, he decided to illustrate our Lord's attitude towards the Mosaic law by a few specially revealing utterances. With John the Baptist, the old Dispensation came to an end (verse 16). But not God's Law; that is something unchangeable (verse 17). Nor does that mean that the Pharisees have anything to be proud of; they have been false to their own stewardship—witness their accommodating attitude over the question of divorce (verse 18).

In verse 21 the words "but no man was ready to give them to him" are of little or no manuscript authority, and it looks as if they had been supplied, appositely enough, from 15.16. Thus we have no definite evidence that Dives neglected the duty of almsgiving. But the general context, especially in view of verse 25, shews that our Lord is repeating the same lesson which he has given in verse 9 above. Does it follow that the story is a mere moral apologue, insisting on the duty of almsgiving; that there is no parable about it (in the strict sense) at all? This would be credible if the story had ended with verse 26; just as we might have supposed the Prodigal Son to be a mere moral apologue, if the last eight verses of it had been lacking. Here, as there, it is difficult not to feel that the story is overweighted at the end if it is merely a story, not a parable as well.

If Lazarus in Abraham's bosom is an image of the Gentiles admitted to the Church of the New Covenant, and Dives in torment an image of the Jewish people shut out from it, verses 27-31, otherwise so difficult to account for, fall into place. It is the old complaint that the Jews have not had the Gospel sufficiently proposed to them; they have asked repeatedly for a sign, and no sign has been given them. The answer is that, if they had been faithful to its teaching, the old Dispensation would have pointed them to the New. The deceitfulness of riches is no longer in question; we have left it behind at verse 26.

Why Lazarus, alone among the characters in our Lord's parables, should be dignified with a name, is a question to which no satisfactory answer has yet been found. But this parable is altogether *sui generis*,

taking us as it does beyond the range of earthly experience. We should be on our guard, however, against the assumption that our Lord meant to give us any detailed information about the conditions of a future life. According to the Greek, Dives is not in "hell" but in "Hades"; a word used, vaguely enough, to describe the place or state of departed spirits. Our Lord is using language familiar to his audience, but not such as to suggest any exact theological ideas to them. Lazarus is described even more vaguely as (leaning) on Abraham's bosom, like St. John at the Last Supper (John 13.23); the picture is that of a Messianic banquet, and it is difficult not to believe that Abraham is named precisely because Lazarus symbolizes the Gentiles; cf. Matthew 8.11, Rom. 4.11. The torments of Dives emphasize the moral lesson of the story, the reversal of human estimates in a future life; the "great gulf" of verse 26 perhaps belongs rather to its allegorical interpretation, corresponding to the "veil" of II Cor. 3.14.

In verse 22 "found his grave in hell" is probably due to some carelessly copied Greek manuscript on which our Latin version depends. According to all other authorities, the text should read "The rich man died too, and was buried. And in hell, in his suffering . . ." In verse 26 "besides all this" seems the only possible rendering of the meaningless phrase "in all these things".

17.1-10. *Certain detached sayings.* The first six verses are mostly paralleled in Matthew (17.19, 18.5, 18.21); they seem to be collected here arbitrarily. "Keep good watch over yourselves" in verse 3 is puzzling; is it to be taken with what goes before, or with what follows? It does not seem to make a natural transition. Possibly it comes from the opening words of Matthew 18.10; Luke may have used an unskilful abridgement of Matthew 18.1-15, which left the words of warning in their right place, though shorn of their true context. Verses 7-10 stand curiously by themselves. It is not merely that they are without parallel in the other Gospels; it is doubtful whether any other passage can be quoted from the New Testament in which the gratuitousness of grace is thrown into such strong relief (cf., however, the contrast in Romans 6.23). At the same time, they are evidently to be read in conjunction with Luke 12.37, which stands out in what appears to be a deliberate

contrast. Our Lord seems to stress now one side of the mystery of grace, now the other; cf. notes on Matthew 13.36-43.

17.11-19. *Healing of the ten lepers.* Only Luke records this story; he has already recorded, in 5.12-14, how a single leper was healed earlier on. The rubric in verse 11 may be a repetition of those which are to be found in 9.51 and 13.22; but the phrasing is vague, and might apply to any journey between Galilee and Judaea—the story seems to be told, not necessarily in its right place, for the sake of the comment made in verses 17 and 18. It might even be suggested that the subject of gratitude links this passage with verses 7-10; God rewards when he is not strictly bound in gratitude, man remains ungrateful, even when he has so much to be thankful for. Curiously, this seems to be the only passage in which our Lord explicitly alludes to the duty of thanksgiving. The circumstance that the grateful leper was not of Jewish origin underlines the teaching of chapters 15 and 16, as it has been interpreted above. The delayed action, unusual in the history of our Lord's miracles (cf. 5.13 above), was perhaps purposely designed to give the Samaritan a special opportunity of manifesting his good dispositions.

17.20-37. *Suddenness of God's visitations.* Cf. notes on Matthew 24, passim. It does not seem likely that these verses ever formed a single, continuous discourse; they are more probably isolated sayings grouped together, in Luke's manner, with only a vague nexus of thought. The first two sayings (verses 20-22) are peculiar to Luke, and the bearing of them is doubtful. Some would translate "among you" rather than "in you"; cf. 11.20 above. But it is difficult to account for the omission of the operative word "already", if this were the true explanation. More probably the sense is that the kingdom of God is something which manifests itself internally, in men's souls; not that it was present in the souls of our Lord's questioners here and now, but it was there potentially (the rendering "within your reach" is hardly possible Greek). The Pharisees must search for the kingdom within their souls if anywhere, instead of expecting an outward manifestation. However we read the passage, it seems clear that our Lord does not identify "the

kingdom" with "the coming of the Son of Man" which still lies in the future, but with a reign of grace present here and now in men's hearts.

Verse 22 does not belong to the same context; a different audience is addressed. It has been suggested that "one of the days of the Son of Man" means one of the days when the Son of Man lived among us on earth; but, though this is possible (cf. 5.35 above), it is more natural to take the phrase here in the sense which obviously belongs to it in verse 26 below. The world will become so difficult for Christians that they will find themselves longing for our Lord's Second Coming, which will nevertheless be delayed. This connects easily with the false alarms of verses 23 and 24. Verse 25 is a caution (perhaps belonging to some other context) against the idea that our Lord meant to proclaim himself as the Messiah without any preliminaries of suffering and rejection (cf. 24.26 below).

In verses 26 to 30, as in 15.3-10 above, Luke gives us two illustrations of our Lord's point where Matthew gives us only one. In either case, it is clear that Luke did not derive his material from Matthew as we know it, or from any series of quotations taken from Matthew as we know it; a source common to the two Evangelists is the most probable explanation. The verbal resemblances here are stronger than in chapter 15, but the discrepancies are considerable; Luke may be giving us an independent translation from an Aramaic original. Verse 31 is common to the Synoptic tradition, but verse 32, which binds the whole context together, is peculiar to Luke. Luke, then, in this case has preserved for us a fragment of our Lord's teaching in its entirety; depending on a different tradition, Matthew has given us a shortened version of it, and Mark a mere echo. The "coming of the Son of Man" seems here to be identified with, or perhaps imaged under, a moment of acute political crisis—perhaps the invasion of Judaea by the Romans just before A.D. 70; otherwise the question of going home to fetch something could hardly arise. But the spiritual lesson inculcated is no doubt detachment from worldly goods; and it is perhaps in this sense that the Evangelist inserts (verse 33) the warning he has already reported in 9.24 above; we must die to the world if we are to find life.

Verses 34 and 35 (Matthew 24.40,41) may belong to the same utter-



ance as the verses which go before; the differences between Matthew and Luke are considerable. But the circumstances are no longer those of a hostile invasion; the phrase "one will be taken and the other left" does not come into the picture. We are now expressly confronted, it seems, with a moment of Divine judgement, at which a different fate—election or rejection—will be accorded to different souls in virtue of interior dispositions not hitherto disclosed. With verses 36 and 37 we return to the destruction of Jerusalem (see notes on Matthew 24.1-35). The question "Where will all this happen?" (not in Matthew) would have been out of place in the great final prophecy (chapter 21 below), where *ex hypothesi* the fate of Jerusalem is in question. It seems likely, then, that Luke has given verses 23-37 in their true historical setting, and that Matthew has included their contents in his 24th chapter merely for convenience.

The second part of verse 35 is wanting in the best manuscripts, and was perhaps unintelligently supplied from Matthew 24.40.

18.1-14. *The Unjust Judge; the Pharisee and the Publican.* The parable of the Unjust Judge is closely in line with that of the Importunate Friend (see notes on Luke 11.1-13). But whereas the earlier parable deals with the prayer of petition in general, this one is restricted in its application (cf. verse 7) to prayers offered by the Church in times of persecution. The end of verse 8 gives a sudden and curious twist to the discourse. "Yes, God will bring relief in answer to those prayers . . . only, by the time that relief actually comes, will men have enough faith left to be praying for it?" The question should be read, not as a gloomy foreboding, but as a fresh appeal to Christians to persevere in supplication for the Church.

No connexion of thought can reasonably be established between the two parables which are here grouped together. It seems likely that they have come together by accident, as being the last two items in Luke's private store of records. All through the last eight or nine chapters, the Gospel has had little in common with Matthew, almost nothing with Mark; now he is returning to the Synoptic tradition, and before he does so he includes these two extracts from our Lord's teaching, which had been left over. "To them" in verse 9 does not necessarily suggest

that the persons against whom the parallel was directed were actually present; if Luke took over his rubric from an Aramaic original, the sense might be "*à propos* of them". That the persons in question were Pharisees, there can be little doubt; but the vague allusion suggests that some particular sect or set of Pharisees was in question. A warning may be derived from the text by Christians who fail to recognize their need of grace; but in the first instance it will have been the Pharisees our Lord had in mind, and the justification which they claimed will have been that supposedly attained by observance of the Mosaic law. In verse 14, the Greek manuscripts are much confused over the phrase "than the other"; the Latin has the curiously Hebraic expression "from (that is, in comparison with) the other". Possibly Luke gave a literal translation from the Aramaic, which the puzzled Greek copyists thought it best to correct, and the Latin, going back to a very early text, has here preserved the true reading.

18.15-30. *On admission to the kingdom of heaven; the rich young man; the heavenly reward.* See notes on Matthew 19.13-30, Mark 10.13-31. From this point onwards, Luke rejoins the Synoptist tradition right up to the end of chapter 22, and has little to add to it. The "little children" of verse 15 are clearly infants in arms; we might have supposed from the other Synoptists—especially from the phrase "let them come to me", although Luke also uses it—that older children were meant. In verse 18, the rich young man is characterized as "a ruler"; but the word seems to come in parenthetically, and perhaps only means that he belonged to the governing classes, not that he was (e.g.) the ruler of some synagogue. All three Synoptists make this incident follow directly on the Blessing of the Children; Luke is less concerned than the others to suggest that it was due to a chance encounter (Matthew 19.16, Mark 10.17) and perhaps indicates, by the phrase used in verse 26, that others besides the Apostles were present. But he, too, makes Peter's question about the rewards of discipleship arise out of the diatribe on riches. The motive of discipleship is variously represented in the three accounts; it is not for our Lord's sake (Matthew) or for the sake of our Lord and his message (Mark) but for the sake of God's kingdom that the renunciation is made, according to Luke's version.

These tiny variations of emphasis help to remind us that even where (as here) the three Synoptists are manifestly following a common tradition, each is checking it by reference to the form of the story which had come down to him.

18.31-43. *The Passion again; Bartimaeus.* See notes on Matthew 20.17-34, Mark 10.32-52. Only here, among the explicit predictions of his Passion, is our Lord represented as connecting it with the Old Testament prophecies. It may be that Luke is simply drawing out the implications of the term "Son of Man"; assuredly he is not misrepresenting our Lord's thought—to fill in the outlines of the Messianic picture given by the Old Testament writers was clearly a preoccupation with him (cf. Matthew 26.56, Luke 22.37, 24.27,44). As in 9.45, Luke emphasizes the want of perceptiveness evinced by the Apostles.

Both in Matthew and in Mark, the request made by the sons of Zebedee comes between the third prediction of the Passion and the story of Bartimaeus. Did Luke omit it deliberately, and if so on what ground? Is this an authentic case of "sparing the Apostles"? It may be so; Luke was writing at a time when questions of precedence in the Apostolic college had still their meaning; he probably wrote at Rome, in close touch with St. Paul, and St. Paul clearly had enemies who had denied his claim to the Apostleship. Might not the statement that the chief places in the kingdom were for those "for whom it has been destined" (Mark 10.40) be read as Pauline propaganda? On the other hand, Luke's omission of Mark 10.35-45 may have been purely editorial. We have seen reason to suspect that he was afraid of inadvertently duplicating incidents (cf. notes on 5.1-11 and 7.36-8.3 above). He knew from private sources that there was a dispute over precedence, not recorded by earlier Evangelists, at the Last Supper (22.24-27 below). Did Mark 10.35-45 refer to the same incident, or a different one? Luke could not be sure, and here as elsewhere he omitted a section of the common tradition to make room for an incident which he had on more direct evidence.

For the apparent discrepancy between Luke and his fellow-Evangelists over the topography of the Bartimaeus miracle, see notes on Matthew. Luke has evidently a source of his own here, perhaps the

same which gave him the story of Zacchaeus; and if he appears to correct Matthew and Mark, it is best to accept the correction.

19.1-10. *Zacchaeus*. The story appears to be a translation from some Aramaic original, but there is no trace of it in the other Gospels. The only difficulty about it is to determine the precise sense of verse 9. Was Zacchaeus a Jew, or a Gentile? At first sight it looks as if it meant "Salvation has been brought to this house, and why not? Zacchaeus is, by birth, as good a Jew as the rest of you (and therefore a proper subject, even on your own shewing, for redemption)". But a closer study of the conjunction which Luke uses here suggests that the two halves of the sentence are more closely knit together. "They had no child, Elizabeth being barren" (Luke 1.7); "God raised him up, by releasing him from the pangs of death, it being impossible that death should have the mastery of him" (Acts 2.24); and so here, "salvation has been brought to this house, Zacchaeus having shewed himself a true child of Abraham". So interpreted, the sentence need not mean that Zacchaeus was in fact a Jew by birth, and the Fathers commonly interpreted it in the sense of Rom. 4.11. The word "sinner" in verse 7 may have the sense of "Gentile" as in Mark 14.41, Gal. 2.15. On the other hand, Zacchaeus has a Jewish name, and our Lord's remark can bear the required sense even on the assumption that he was of Jewish ancestry. "Salvation has been brought to this house, Zacchaeus behaving like the son of Abraham he is".

In verse 5, our Lord addresses him by name; a fact which does not seem to create any surprise (contrast John 1.48). Possibly, then, we are meant to understand that our Lord had been told about him; but it seems simpler to account for it by that direct knowledge which our Lord shews on other occasions.

19.11-28. *Parable of the pounds*. There is a puzzling resemblance between this parable and that of the Talents (Matthew 25.14-30), just as there is a puzzling resemblance between the Parable of the Great Supper (14.15-24 above) and that of the Wedding Feast (Matthew 22. 1-14). In either case, it is impossible to suppose that the differences are due to the process of translation from one language into another. In



either case, the reader is tempted to suppose that the same story has been remembered, rather hazily, by two different auditors. But this latter view, which might be suggested as a reconciliation between Matthew 22 and Luke 14, breaks down here; it is not merely the details that differ, it is the very stuff of the parable. In Matthew, the deposits entrusted to the various servants differ, and the profits which accrue differ in the same proportion. The implication is (at first sight anyhow) that human effort counts for nothing in the calculating of rewards; if a man will avail himself of the spiritual wealth offered him, it will automatically double itself. Whereas in Luke the same deposit is entrusted to each, and the profit which accrues (as in the Parable of the Sower) differs according to the dispositions of each; rewards are bestowed, it would seem, exactly in proportion to human effort. It is difficult to believe that, if our Lord told the story as Matthew tells it, Luke could have misrepresented it so blindly, or *vice versa*. We are driven to the conclusion that our Lord used the same illustration more than once, and used it, now to emphasize one side of the great mystery of grace, now the other.

It remains uncertain whether the two stories had not, by their very similarity, created some confusion in the sources from which the Evangelists drew. The story as Luke tells it produces a crop of minor uncertainties. His rubric in verse 11 would really be more appropriate to Matthew's story with its long interval of time (Matthew 25.19). Why are there ten servants, and why, in verse 20, is it assumed that there were only three of them? Again, how do we account for the curious discrepancy that in Matthew the worthless servant is cast out into the darkness, whereas in Luke he is only punished (it would seem) by the loss of his capital? It is tempting to suppose that the two stories, as our Lord told them, had not a great deal of resemblance; it was only in the course of transmission that details were transferred from one to the other.

It has often been pointed out that the events narrated in verse 14 are closely parallel to the experiences of Archelaus (Herod the Great's successor) when he went to Rome in 4 B.C. But it is by no means certain that our Lord meant to remind his audience of the incident.

19.29-48. *Our Lord rides into Jerusalem and weeps over it; the Temple cleansed.* See notes on Matthew 21.1-22, Mark 11.1-26. Luke adds nothing fresh to our picture of the scene at Bethphage, except that he reports the multitude as crying out "Peace in heaven, and glory in the height". This can hardly be a translation of the word "Hosanna", and the idea of "peace in heaven" is so difficult to parallel (Job 25.2 is the nearest approach to it) that it is perhaps best attributed to mob-excitement. What follows is much more difficult. If our Lord wept over Jerusalem on this occasion—an occasion so public, so fully documented—how is it that the other Evangelists have no record of this touching circumstance? And why does Luke, in his turn, omit all reference to the withering of the fig-tree (Matthew 21.18, Mark 11.12)?

Probably there is some merely editorial explanation of both the anomalies. Verses 39 and 40 record a protest by the Pharisees, which is more likely to have been made in the city itself than on the way to it—what were Pharisees doing in the Palm Sunday procession? But, in the private source from which Luke drew, the Lament over Jerusalem followed immediately on the story of the Pharisees' protest; the arrangement will have been artificial, perhaps because the stones of Jerusalem figured prominently in both our Lord's utterances. Luke assumed that the occasion of the Lament (which may have been uttered on any day of Holy Week) was the triumphal entry itself, and left it where he found it. And he may have omitted the story of the fig-tree because he had already included the moral of it, though not the fact of the miracle, in 13.6-9 above.

Verses 43 and 44 have suggested to certain critics (who suppose the Gospel to have been written after A.D. 70) that Luke has touched up the prophecy, even if he did not invent it, so as to correspond with the facts of the siege conducted by Titus. But the destruction of Jerusalem is no less plainly foretold in Matthew 24.2, Mark 13.2, and the details of it might have been supplied, without extraordinary foreknowledge, by anyone acquainted with the methods of contemporary warfare.

20.1-44. *A question answered by a question; the Wicked Husbandmen; the day of riddles.* See notes on Matthew 21.23-46, and 22.15-46,

Mark 11.27-12.37. Luke here follows the common tradition, and is hardly distinguishable from Mark. But a curious point of interpretation arises in verse 18.

What seems to have happened is this. Luke, with Mark's account in front of him, assumed that the "stone" mentioned in the quotation from Ps. 117 was our Lord himself. This was a natural assumption; evidently the prophecy was applied in this sense by the first generation of Christians, as in Acts 4.11 (cf. Rom. 9.33, I Peter 2.7). There was a stray fragment of our Lord's teaching, in which he had compared himself to a stone, with a double reference to Is. 8.14 and Dan. 2.45, and this seemed an appropriate place for its insertion; Luke inserted it accordingly. Certain copyists, with the idea of assimilating Matthew's text to Luke's, interpolated it in Matthew 21.44—others omit it in that passage, preserving the true text.

But *was* the insertion appropriate? Was our Lord referring to himself as the stone which the builders had rejected? That would surely imply that the husbandmen in the parable had made a wrong choice. In fact, as we know, the Jewish rulers did choose Barabbas instead of Christ. But in the parable the story is not one of mistaken choice; it is one of deliberate rebellion. And Matthew 21.43 gives quite a different twist to the argument; plainly, it is the "other nation" that is identified with the despised stone—the Gentiles, not the Jews, are to be the corner-stone of the Christian Church. Mark omitted the verse about the "other nation", as a mere restatement of what had already been made clear (Mark 12.9). And Luke, without this pointer to guide him, proceeded to insert verse 18, to the manifest confusion of the argument.

The question asked about the greatest commandment (Matthew 22.34-40, Mark 12.28-34) is omitted entirely by Luke. It seems hard to account for the omission except on the principle we have already seen at work (see notes on 18.31-43 above) that Luke was afraid of duplicating incidents through inadvertence. The story of the lawyer's question, which led up to the parable of the Good Samaritan (see 10.25 above) might or might not be the same as the story related by Matthew and Mark here. To be on the safe side, Luke made his usual cut in the common tradition, and contented himself with inserting verse 39, an evident reminiscence of Mark 12.32.

20.45-21.4. *The Pharisees denounced; the widow's almsgiving.* See notes on Mark 12.38-44. Verse 46 is interesting as throwing a light, in all probability, on the method by which Luke's Gospel was compiled. It is, in part, a repetition of Luke 11.43; and although our Lord may have used the same phrase on two different occasions, the natural inference is that Luke has, inadvertently, gone over the same ground twice. Here, he is following Mark, and gives the words in Mark's context—just after the day of riddles and just before the prophecy of judgement. In chapter 11 he is following the tradition of Matthew, but puts the whole utterance (Matthew 23) in a quite different context. Which suggests that what he had in front of him was not Matthew, but a series of extracts from our Lord's teaching which he felt at liberty to insert in any context he chose. Whether that series of extracts was one used by Matthew, or one derived from Matthew, the present passage does not help to determine.

21.5-38. *The great prophecy of judgement.* See notes on Matthew 24, Mark 13. Luke is following the common Synoptic tradition, except in verses 24-26 and 34-38; everywhere, when he is reproducing it, he follows Mark, not Matthew. He has some noteworthy turns of phrase which are not found in the other Gospels; the promise, for example, in verse 18 "no hair of your head shall perish" and the consequent exhortation to endurance. But the main crux of the chapter comes in verse 20.

The mysterious "abomination of desolation" has disappeared from Luke's account. Instead, we are given the rather colourless assurance "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, be sure the time has come when she will be laid waste". The more advanced critics regard this as a proof that Luke wrote after A.D. 70; the city had fallen, and the abomination of desolation had not materialized; Luke, therefore, to save the credit of the prophecy, substituted (without much imagination) an event that *had* materialized—namely, the siege. The tendency of more orthodox writers is to suppose that the presence of Roman armies at the gates of Jerusalem was precisely what our Lord meant by "the abomination of desolation"; Luke, therefore, has not altered our Lord's statement, he has simply given us the code *en clair*. Neither



solution is without its difficulties. On every other ground, an earlier date for Luke is preferable; and if the wording of verse 20 were unmistakable proof of late first-century authorship, why should not an overzealous copyist, rather than Luke himself, be blamed for it? But it is not, in fact, the kind of *vaticinium post eventum* which either Luke or a copyist would have been likely to foist on the text of our Lord's words. A falsifier would have given us a sign which was *recognizable*—for instance, the profanation of the Temple by the Jews themselves, as related by Josephus (*Bell. Jud.* 6.1). He would not have been content with a "sign" which any strategist might have identified as foreshadowing the fall of the city. On the other hand, the presence of foreign soldiers at the gates would hardly justify a reference to the abomination of desolation "standing where it ought not".

It is perhaps more reasonable to suggest that Luke left out the obscure topical allusion simply because it was obscure, simply because it was topical; how was he to get his Gentile readers to be interested in portents, whether past or still to come, which would have no repercussions beyond Judaea? It was necessary, however, to fill up the gap in the prophecy, and he was content to repeat, in a somewhat altered form, the prediction he had already recorded in 19.43 above.

Verses 24-26 present a further difficulty. Luke seems to have cut short the graphic description, given by Matthew and Mark, of conditions in Judaea at the time of the Roman invasion—but cf. 17.23, 24 above, which correspond to Matthew 24.23 and 27. More importantly, he has made an addition of his own. In Matthew and Mark, there is nothing to shew that the fall of Jerusalem and the Second Coming are not contemporaneous. Luke leaves Jerusalem in ruins with verse 24, and allows, in verses 25 and 26, for an interval of unspecified length between the two events. Are we to suppose, then, that Luke wrote soon after A.D. 70, and was obliged to allow for an interval simply because Jerusalem had already fallen, and the Second Coming was still delayed?

The speculation is tempting, as a matter of mere criticism; it falls down when it is subjected to a literary test. Verses 24-26 are not a stop-gap, invented so as to by-pass a difficulty; they are manifestly authentic. The phrase "until the time granted to the Gentiles has run out" in verse 24 has no real parallel (though it may contain an echo of

Tob. 14.5 in the Greek version). It is not what an interpolator would have invented; and indeed we may suspect that Rom. 11.25 is St. Paul's interpretation of it. It was not Luke's invention; but did Luke find it in some other context, and arbitrarily graft it on to our Lord's great prophecy? Once again, literary considerations are decisive against such a view. Commonly, when Matthew and Luke run side by side, it is Matthew's arrangement of the material that hangs together and creates a literary whole. Here, the case is altered. It is the prophecy as you read it in Matthew and Mark that seems vague and fluid; whole paragraphs might be transposed, you feel, without damage to its continuity. Whereas in Luke the whole story unrolls itself—early persecutions by the Jews which give no real ground for alarm; the siege, the flight, the sack of the city; the uneasy period of suspense, penetratingly described; and then, at last, the coming of the Son of Man. It is not Judaea, but the whole world (verses 26 and 35), that will be affected.

But, if Luke gives us the full account, mutilated by the other Evangelists, what reason can be assigned for the mutilation? The answer is presumably that Matthew, who was writing, in part at least, for Jewish readers, was unwilling to shock national susceptibilities with the suggestion that there would be an interval between the destruction of Jerusalem and God's judgements on the Gentile world. The silence of Mark remains unexplained; but if he depended on Matthew for his material, no explanation is needed.

22.1-20. *The Last Supper; institution of the Eucharist.* See notes on Matthew 26.17-35, Mark 14.1-31. Luke omits the story of Mary anointing our Lord's feet, presumably because he was not certain that he had not already told it (7.36-50 above).

Matthew and Mark seem to give the date of the Last Supper as "the first day of unleavened bread", which ought to mean the 24 hours between sunset on Good Friday, Nisan 14th, and sunset on Holy Saturday. It was suggested (see notes on Matthew) that the phrase they both use ought to be interpreted "on the day before the unleavened bread", i.e. Maundy Thursday. Evidently, Luke's formula is not patient of the same explanation. But can we be sure that it was meant to give

us any definite information about the time-scheme of Holy Week? "Now came the day of unleavened bread, when the paschal victim was due to be sacrificed, so Jesus sent two of his disciples on an errand"—does it necessarily convey the impression that the disciples were actually sent on that morning? In point of fact, not being a Jew like Matthew, Luke was probably quite indifferent to the chronology of events; he knew (verse 15) that the Last Supper was in some sense a Paschal meal, and at the back of his mind he may have assumed (as we all assume until we take to reading John) that the day of unleavened bread fell that year on a Thursday, not on a Friday. If challenged, he would have expressed himself more carefully; he knew that Friday was the feast-day, since it was on Friday that Barabbas was given his reprieve (23.17 below). But for the moment he is thinking of other things. He tells the story of the mysterious guest-chamber much as Mark tells it, though with the additional information that it was Peter and John who were sent to find it. Like the other Evangelists, he says that they made ready the paschal meal without telling us whether they prepared it for this evening, or against the morrow. Immediately afterwards, in verse 15, he quotes words of our Lord which definitely identify the meal that lies before him as the Pasch—surely he does? The idea put forward by some commentators that we should interpret verse 15 as the expression of a vain wish, "I have longed to eat this year's Pasch with you, but it was not to be", reads too much into the expression.

Our Lord, then, according to Luke's account, called the Last Supper a pasch. Either we have to suppose that the Galileans had seen the new moon a day earlier than the Jews that year (see notes on Matthew), and were celebrating the feast on the Thursday; or else that the Son of Man, being Lord of the pasch as he was Lord of the Sabbath, deliberately anticipated the paschal ceremony by a day. The latter seems the more probable explanation; and indeed the whole verse falls into place much better if we regard it as the true explanation. Why, after all, does our Lord say anything about "longing" to share the feast with his disciples? We have all felt, before now, that the remark was unnecessary as an introduction to verses 16-18. But if the ceremonies of the pasch were being anticipated, the day before they were due, the sentiment is easily understood. "I could not bear to undergo the Passion

that awaits me, without taking the opportunity of sharing our last paschal meal together. It is our last paschal meal; we shall not share it again till rites and ceremonies are done away in the world to come. That is why we are celebrating it to-night". That, surely, was in our Lord's mind; whether it was in Luke's mind is more doubtful; it has been suggested above that he may not have adverted to the chronological problem which exercises his readers.

Does "the kingdom of God" in this passage mean the Church on earth, or the Church in heaven? We can hardly doubt that it means the latter. Not that the metaphor of sitting down to table is necessarily inapplicable to the Church on earth; in 13.29 above this is at least a tolerable interpretation. But the picture of our Lord sharing a banquet with his Church militant on earth is quite unparalleled; on earth his servants wait on him (17.8), it is in heaven that he will wait on them (12.37). Nor can we reasonably interpret the saying in the light of Acts 10.41; our Lord's words clearly envisage a long parting, not a separation of three days; and why should it be "new" wine that our Lord will drink with his disciples on Easter Day? No, the sense is, "It is our last meal together this side of heaven". The word "until" should be interpreted in the light of what has been said in the note on Matthew 1.25. Hebrew idiom says "None of them was killed until they all returned alive", meaning, "None of them was killed *but* they all returned alive". So here; our Lord is not really saying that he and his disciples will eat together in heaven. He is saying that they will never eat and drink together again, but that their companionship will be fulfilled and renewed in heaven.

There is nothing, then, in verses 16-18 that is, at least directly, Eucharistic. It might, indeed, be suggested that they are meant to be the epitaph of the old rites and shadows, which are disappearing. But, though that may have been in our Lord's mind, it does not appear in what he says. All he says is that he and his friends are parting, to meet in other conditions. But he did use food and drink as the symbol of their association; and, as he uttered the word "wine", he seems to have handed round the loving-cup, a ceremony which took place four separate times during the Jewish paschal meal. It was perhaps natural that Matthew and Mark, who have preserved verse 18 without the two



foregoing verses, should have tacked it on after their description of the first Eucharist. But it does not belong there; Luke evidently means the whole section, verses 15-18, to be the beginning of the proceedings, followed (he does not say at what interval) by the institution of the Christian Sacrament.

The result has been unfortunate; the words "Take this and share it among you; I tell you, I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine again, until the kingdom of God has come" have been mistaken for a Eucharistic utterance, alike by ancient copyists and by modern critics. Certain Western manuscripts—perhaps confused by some accidental disturbance in the text from which they were copying—have omitted verse 20 altogether; at the same time, they have omitted in verse 19 the words "given for you; do this for a commemoration of me", thus restoring the consecration of the Host to the shorter form in which it is preserved by Matthew and Mark. Probably they were under the impression that the consecration of the Chalice had already been mentioned in verses 17 and 18. Modern critics have not been slow to urge that this is the true text as Luke wrote it, the latter part of verse 19 and the whole of verse 20 having been imported by later copyists from I Cor. 11.24 and 25, where the words of Institution are remarkably similar.

Plainly this account of the matter will not do. The whole passage is arranged in parallel utterances, food—drink—food—drink. If you cut out verse 16 *and* verse 20, you might restore symmetry to it, but there is no shadow of authority for omitting verse 16. In the text as Luke wrote it, verse 19 must somehow have found a parallel. Either he wrote the text we have, or there was some early, accidental disturbance which left the Western manuscripts incomplete, while the Eastern copyists were fain to borrow a stop-gap extract from I Corinthians. Probably the text as we have it in the great majority of existing manuscripts is the text as Luke wrote it. That he should follow a Pauline tradition about the words of Institution is hardly surprising, since he was probably St. Paul's convert. The Western manuscripts may have made their omission simply because they thought the consecration of the Chalice had been described in verses 17 and 18. But a different explanation is more likely.

The words "which is given for you" are followed, a few lines lower down, by the words "which is shed for you". The eye of some early Western copyist may have passed on inadvertently from the first to the second formula, with the result that he wrote simply, "This is my body which is shed for you". To mend the obvious error, the Western manuscripts simply omitted the last five words, and left it at that.

The form which the words of Consecration take in Luke's text (as it stands) will be discussed in the notes on I Corinthians.

22.21-38. *Further conversation in the Cenacle.* See notes on Matthew 26.17-35, Mark 14.22-31. Luke is the only Evangelist who succeeds in conveying the impression that our Lord's prophecy of his betrayal followed on, instead of preceding, the institution of the Eucharist. Matthew and Mark do not, however, rule out the supposition that Judas was present at the first Eucharist; John 13 (see notes there) suggests that Judas left the Cenacle before the Institution, but only by inference. All that concerns us here is whether the *prophecy* of the betrayal was made early in the meal, or late. On the whole, it seems likely that Luke has grouped together, in these verses, a collection of isolated sayings which are not placed in their historical context, and verses 21-23 may well be among them.

Verses 24-27 present a milder problem; Matthew (20.25) and Mark (10.42) give our Lord's words a more appropriate setting, just after the request of Zebedee's children. It may be that Luke has given part of this utterance in its wrong context, but assuredly he is right in telling us that there *was* a dispute over precedence at the Last Supper—it will have provided the text for our Lord's acted sermon, when he washed his disciples' feet. It is impossible to read Luke 22.24-27 and John 13.1-15 without feeling that they dovetail into one another perfectly. The order of events at the Last Supper is perhaps best summarized as follows. (1) Our Lord's leave-taking, with its reference to the paschal meal, as in verses 15-18 above. (2) His promise that the disciples shall sit at table in his kingdom, as in verses 28-30 below. (3) A consequent dispute over precedence, for which he rebukes them, in the present passage. (4) The washing of feet. (5) The prophecy of

the betrayal. (6) The institution of the Eucharist. (7) The prophecy of St. Peter's denial. But any reconstruction of this kind must be hazardous.

The concluding words of verse 30 are to be found in a different context in Matthew (19.28); but our Lord may well have used a formula like this on two separate occasions. Verses 31 and 32, which form such a natural preface to the Apostle's boast in verse 33, have no parallel in Matthew or Mark. It is hard to believe that Mark had never heard of them, but by no means improbable that St. Peter should have deterred him from publishing them, from motives of humility. What is more curious is that Matthew should have omitted them. Mere inadvertence, or lapse of memory, seems the most probable explanation. Meanwhile, Luke has omitted the warning recorded by Matthew (26.31) and Mark (14.27) about the sheep being scattered, with the appended promise "But I will go on before you into Galilee, when I have risen from the dead". Luke, alone among the Evangelists, makes no reference to any meeting between the risen Christ and his disciples in Galilee. Are we to suppose that he discredited such stories, and omitted the prophecy here as lending colour to them? But, apart from the improbability of such an attitude, why should he not have omitted Matthew 26.32, Mark 14.28, and preserved for us the prediction that the sheep would be scattered? Perhaps he regarded the whole utterance merely as an introduction to St. Peter's boast, and, having an alternative introduction of his own (which included the same metaphor of scattering), he rejected the one in favour of the other. Or he may be "sparing the Apostles"; see further on this at the end of notes on the next section but one.

The language of verses 31 and 32 admits of being closely pressed. Satan, as in the first two chapters of Job, has asked for very special permission to put human beings to the test. But not, as in the first two chapters of Job, a single human being in isolation; he will test a collection of human beings to see which of them is worth having *relatively to the others*, as a sieve distinguishes the refuse from the grain. One of them, who is now addressed in the singular, will emerge creditably from the test; Peter will at least follow, while the others run away. True, he is not a hundred per-cent pure grain; he too will need conversion, a

return to his former ideals, but when he is converted, it is for him to be the nucleus around which his brethren cohere. From the Greek, it is possible to obtain the sense, "and do thou convert thy brethren and be their support"; but the prophecy, so interpreted, contains no suggestion of failure, and if there was no suggestion of failure, why does St. Peter protest so vigorously in the following verse?

Our Lord's words in verses 35-37 are probably the most obscure in the Gospels. Perhaps we do best justice to all their unexpected turns of phrase if we take them as an ironical utterance, something to this effect. "When you went out on your missionary travels, we took the utmost pains to avoid giving scandal; carrying neither purse nor scrip, you could not be accused of enriching yourselves, let alone of being dishonest. It was all to no purpose; I am to be condemned as a criminal, and suffer between two thieves. Innocence is no protection; you had best carry what money you will, or, if money you have none, sell your coat for a sword and turn highway robber!" Not that our Lord means his followers to be altogether careless of the impression they create (I Cor. 9.18-22); but he will warn us, in his paradoxical fashion, that, try as we may, the world will give us no credit for our good intentions.

22.39-53. *The Agony in the garden; the Betrayal.* See notes on Matthew 26.36-56, Mark 14.32-53, John 18.1-11. "Parted from them" in verse 41 might even be rendered "tore himself away from them", as in Acts 21.1; but the verb seems to have a weakened force in late Greek, cf. II Mach. 12.10 and 17. "A stone's throw" gives us a more accurate picture than that supplied by the earlier Evangelists; it would be easy for the three Apostles to hear what our Lord said, if he prayed aloud. What is said in verses 43 and 44 seems rather to rest on the authority of our Lord himself, like the story of the Temptation; the angel was seen by him, not by anyone else. On the genuineness of these two verses our authorities are much divided; before the end of the fourth century, on the testimony of St. Hilary and St. Jerome, there were manuscripts in circulation which omitted them. The probability is that they were omitted in some early copies as being of doubtful theological tendency; the idea that our Lord could shew weakness to such an extreme degree,



or need the consolations of an angel, seemed to play into the hands of those heretics who denied his Divinity. In such cases, an omission is always more likely than an insertion. It is difficult to imagine an orthodox copyist having the hardihood to insert an anti-Docetic text, the skill to write it exactly in the style and vocabulary of Luke, and the optimism to suppose that he could avoid discovery. Whereas a copy designed for public reading might easily have the passage bracketed, for fear of giving scandal to simple folk, and the brackets might be understood as casting doubt on the authenticity of the passage.

To raise the question why the other Evangelists tell us nothing about this incident, is to assume more knowledge than we have about the ultimate authorities upon which the Gospel record rests. We find no difficulty in understanding why Luke should have details about the Infancy which are not found elsewhere; mediately or immediately, he must have derived his information from the Blessed Virgin. But why should we imagine that the Blessed Virgin received no confidences from her Divine Son after his resurrection? And why should he not describe to her such intimate experiences as he communicated to nobody else?

All through the history of our Lord's Passion and Resurrection it seems as if Luke were depending less on the Synoptic tradition of Matthew and Mark, more and more on private sources, which sometimes bring him closer to John—as if the later Evangelists had access to material which had not hitherto been available. Verse 51 is a puzzling case in point. Mark only mentions the blow; John adds nothing except the assailant's name, Peter, and the servant's name, Malchus. In Matthew, it is the text for a rebuke addressed to the assailant, in Luke it is the occasion of a miracle. John may have assumed the miracle as something already familiar to his readers; but why does Matthew say nothing about it, or Mark? It is difficult to account for the discrepancy, unless we suppose that the gesture our Lord made was a rapid and unobtrusive one, so that the bystanders were unconscious of it at the time; it was only later that the fact of the miracle, or the name of the *miraculé*, came to light.

The formula with which our Lord introduces the miracle is obscure enough to make us certain that the incident is no mere invention of

the Evangelist's. It has been interpreted as addressed to his own followers, bidding them let the persecutors have their way, or alternatively as addressed to the persecutors themselves, asking for a moment's liberty of action. The former explanation is more probable; the exact sense is perhaps "Stop at that point". (In Hebrew speech, "up to this point" commonly means "up to and including this point".)

Luke, like John, does not record the flight of the Apostles. The omission may have been inadvertent; or there may be some substance in the view that Luke, here and elsewhere, tries to avoid the description of incidents which represented the Apostles in an unfavourable light. Thus, he omitted in chapter 18 the request made by the sons of Zebedee; and in verse 45 of this chapter he seems to apologize for the three watchers when he tells us that they had fallen asleep "through sorrow". There might be good reason for such an attitude on Luke's part. St. Paul's claim to the apostleship was sometimes called in question by his critics, and it might have savoured of propaganda if one of the Pauline circle had been always calling attention to the lapses of those "who had been apostles before him". If we admit this explanation of Luke's silence here, it may also explain his omission of all reference to the sheep scattering in verse 31 above.

22.54-71. *Christ before the Council; St. Peter's denial.* See notes on Matthew 26.57-75, Mark 14.54-73, John 18.12-27. Which came first, St. Peter's denial, or our Lord's condemnation? John's evidence is non-committal, since he does not explicitly mention that the Jews condemned our Lord to death. Matthew and Mark record an examination before the high priest at night, followed by St. Peter's denial; they add that a meeting of the Council was held early in the morning (Matthew 27.1, Mark 15.1). Luke records the denial of Peter, followed by a meeting of the Council "when day came" (verse 66). It is customary to avoid the difficulty by the suggestion that our Lord was examined late at night, but not condemned to death until a second, more formal meeting was held early next day. This is to harmonize too much; verses 66-71 are surely meant to describe the same scene as Matthew 26.59-68, Mark 14.55-65, and it would be hard to imagine a more formal death-sentence than that passed, according to the first two Evangelists, by a

meeting which appears to be held at night. It seems likely enough that the interrogation described in John 18.19-23 took place when our Lord was brought to the palace. But the formal examination before witnesses, and subsequent condemnation, would be illegal if held at night; probably Mark and Matthew anticipated events here, so as to be finished with the trial before they went on to follow the fortunes of St. Peter, and Luke is deliberately giving the course of events in its true historical setting.

That our Lord turned and looked at St. Peter (verse 61) is a detail only preserved for us by Luke. The mocking of verses 63-65 is mentioned by Matthew and Mark as taking place after the condemnation, but there is no need to suppose that it happened all at one time. Our Lord's answer in verses 67 and 68 is very singularly phrased; it reminds us (like 10.21 and 22 above) that our Lord did use "Johannine" language outside the Fourth Gospel. The words "nor acquit me" are of doubtful manuscript authority, and perhaps only preserve an alternative reading to "answer them" written in the margin. The general implication seems to be, "If I tell you that I, a carpenter's son, am the Christ, you will not believe me. And yet if I ask you what is meant by the term *Christ*, as I did the other day, you cannot give me an answer (Matthew 22.41-46). That is unfair; if you are going to use the term *Christ* in a sense of your own, it is for you, not for me, to determine whether I am the Christ or not". It will be seen that according to Luke the interrogation had to be pressed home, with the question "Thou art, then, the Son of God?" before the more definite answer "Your own lips have said it" could be obtained; it looks as if he had preserved the interview in its full form, whereas the two earlier Evangelists had telescoped it.

23.1-25. *The trial before Pilate and Herod.* Cf. notes on Matthew 27.11-26, Mark 15.1-32, John 18.28-19.16. Luke has preserved for us (verses 4, 14, 22) Pilate's thrice-repeated declaration of our Lord's innocence; this is found in John but not in the other Gospels. The trial before Herod is peculiar to Luke, and the only other reference to it in Scripture also comes to us on Luke's authority (Acts 4.27). But the silence of our other authorities is not a matter for astonishment; this

brief interlude, early in the morning, may have attracted no public attention at the time, and been remembered later by someone to whose evidence Luke had access (cf. 8.3 above, 24.10 below). The details of the accusation, given in verse 2, are also peculiar to Luke, though John bears witness to the general character of them. For the rest of this passage, Luke follows Mark, not attempting to obscure, or to emphasize, the part played by the Jewish crowd in backing up the policy of their rulers.

23.26-43. *The Crucifixion*. See notes on Matthew 27.27-44, Mark 15.1-32, John 19.17-27. Four elements in this recital are peculiar to Luke, but in each case it can readily be understood that they might not have been public property, available to our Lord's earlier biographers. His warning to the women of Jerusalem may have been audible only to them, and perhaps to Simon of Cyrene. The prayer for his persecutors would be heard only by themselves. His interview with the penitent thief would be overheard, at best, only by close bystanders; and the same may be true of the last sigh, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit"—or it may have been heard, for the most part, only as an inarticulate cry. If these touching details of the Passion-story find no place in the common tradition which is followed by Matthew and Mark, it is presumably because that tradition took shape and hardened within a few years of the Crucifixion itself, out of what was common knowledge; no effort had yet been made to glean the memories of private persons who had been in touch with events. What is more remarkable is that Luke, in his turn, should be silent about the cry of dereliction which our Lord uttered on the Cross, and the kindly gesture (recorded not only by Matthew and Mark but equally by John) of the soldier who offered him a drink of wine. The suspicion has been aroused that Luke shrank from recording the sense of abandonment which was felt, mysteriously, by Incarnate God; by the time he wrote (the rationalist will tell us) theology had begun to censor history.

But there is no evidence to support such a conclusion. Luke has recorded the Temptation, he has recorded the Agony in the Garden; why does he suddenly draw a veil over the cry from the Cross? There are no signs of a Docetist tendency in the earliest age; Heb. 5.7 is evidence to the contrary. It is more pertinent to observe that, all through



this part of his narrative, Luke's debt to Mark is sensibly diminished; in the last two chapters of his Gospel, they have only 130 words in common. Absorbed in the new material he was bringing to light, Luke was not at pains to watch the earlier narrative so closely as before; and if he consulted it for the actual description of our Lord's death, his eye may easily have travelled from the "loud voice" of Mark 15:34 to the "loud cry" of Mark 15:37.

Only at one point does textual variation cast uncertainty on the passages peculiar to Luke. The first half of verse 34 is missing in some Western manuscripts. But the authority for our Lord's prayer of forgiveness is overwhelming, and there can be little doubt that it is an omission, not an insertion, we have to account for. An accidental failure of copying is always possible. But it seems more likely, here as in 22.43 above, that the omission was deliberate, or semi-deliberate. In the early days of the Church, it was notoriously a matter of debate whether certain sins could be remitted without prolonged penance, whether certain sins could be remitted in this world at all. Here, as in the first verses of John 8 (assuming the genuineness of that passage), our Lord appears to be condoning very grave sin, without even an expression of sorrow to justify it. And some over-careful authority might well mark such a verse, or such a passage, as unsuitable for public reading, with the result that its genuineness came under suspicion. A similar doubt arises about the mention of the three languages in verse 38; the fact is attested by John (19.20), but in view of the manuscript variations we cannot be certain that Luke's evidence is independent of his.

In verse 31, the reference is probably to that demoralization which fell on a large part of the Jewish people at the time of the siege in A.D. 70; Josephus bears abundant witness to it. But some prefer to understand, "If this is my lot, who am innocent, what will be the fate of the guilty Jewish people?" In verse 35 the rulers mock, while the populace has hitherto stood watching; contrast Mark 15.29 and 30. Contrariwise, in verses 36 and 37 the Roman soldiers mock (although we need not suppose their offer of wine to have been part of the mockery); there is no suggestion of this in Matthew or Mark. No doubt, as a friend of St. Paul, Luke is careful to avoid anything that looks like anti-Jewish propaganda. Verse 39 is evidently a correction

of the too sweeping tradition recorded by Matthew (27.44) and Mark (15.32).

23.44-56. *Our Lord's death and burial.* See notes on Matthew 27.45-66, Mark 15.33-47, John 19.28-42. In verse 46, it is not clear whether the quotation from Ps. 30.5 was itself the loud cry, or whether our Lord made it in a subdued voice *after* uttering a loud cry—presumably the “It is achieved” of John 19.30; the latter view seems more probable.

What was it the centurion said (verse 47)? “This was indeed a just man”, or “No doubt but this was the Son of God”? Harmonists have been busy with the problem; it is doubtful whether they have sufficiently considered the possibility that Luke was using a code-word here. Nobody can read the early chapters of Wisdom without realizing how closely the “just” or “innocent” man there mentioned foreshadows the character of our Lord; cf. especially Wisd. 2.13, “What, would he claim knowledge of divine secrets, give himself out as the son of God?” and 2.17, “If to be just is to be God’s son indeed, then God will take up his cause, will save him from the power of his enemies”. It would not be strange if, in the cipher-language of the early Church, our Lord was referred to as “the Just one”, as the priest in penal times was referred to as “the good man”. In Acts 3.14 St. Peter says “You disowned the holy, the just, and asked for the pardon of a murderer”. In Acts 7.52 St. Stephen refers to “the coming of that just man, whom you in these times have betrayed and murdered”. In Acts 22.14 Ananias assures Paul that he has been chosen “to have sight of him who is Just, and hear speech from his lips”. Is it not probable that early Christian tradition enshrined the centurion’s confession in the words “This was indeed a just man”; that Matthew and Mark have given it us *en clair*, while Luke has left it in code?

Luke gives us two details about the burial which we do not find elsewhere. He tells us that the tomb was a new one, hitherto unused; cf. the statement in Mark 11.2 and Luke 19.30 that the ass on which our Lord rode into Jerusalem had never been ridden before. And he seems to be correcting the implications of Mark 16.1 when he tells us, in verse 56, that the holy women bought their spices on Friday after-

noon, before the sabbath evening began. The probabilities of the situation would have suggested, in any case, that Mark is using language loosely; they would be more likely to make their purchases on the afternoon of Friday than in the dusk of Saturday.

24.1-12. *The empty Tomb.* See notes on Matthew 28.1-15, Mark 16.1-8, John 20.1-9. It is difficult to know whether Luke is following Mark in this section. They have only 24 words in common, and of these, nine depend on doubtful manuscript authority. Luke agrees with Mark in making the women go into the sepulchre in the first instance, but there are two angels as in John (see note there). He seems to be in line with that early, common tradition which retains the memory of a half-certainty—the empty tomb, not the Risen Christ, was the first news that went round on Easter Day. His account of what the angels said to the women will have come from a private source. According to the common tradition, the prophecy that the Son of Man would be given up into the hands of sinners was only made in Gethsemani; even the prophecy that he would be given up to the Gentiles seems to be made, not in Galilee, but at the gates of Jericho (Matthew 20.19, Mark 10.33, Luke 18.32). Having this authentic information of his own to contribute, Luke omits all mention of the tryst in Galilee (Matthew 28.7, Mark 16.7); the only Resurrection appearances which he intended to record took place in Judaea.

That the women were disbelieved is stated in Mark 16.11 and implied in verse 22 of this chapter. Verse 12 is lacking in certain Western manuscripts; see further under the notes on verses 33-53 below.

24.13-35. *The appearance on the road to Emmaus.* This incident seems to be summarized in Mark 16.12; Luke is our only authority for the details. The authenticity of the story is beyond doubt, if only because the attitude of the two disciples is so entirely different from anything we should have expected, from anything a late first-century author would have imagined. They know all about the empty tomb, and about what the angels said, and yet they manifest neither curiosity nor excitement, only a profound sense of gloom. The only explanation possible is that they had been expecting something which had not in fact materi-

alized—the visible dawn of a Messianic kingdom. That our Lord's followers, in spite of every warning, thought of the kingdom as something close at hand is clear from Acts 1.6, where the non-appearance of the kingdom is still a puzzle to the Apostles themselves, on the very eve of the Ascension. So it is with the two disciples; they were expecting the "redemption of Israel", and it has not come; three days have passed, and nothing has happened (verse 21).

Verse 16 clearly implies that a supernatural agency interfered to prevent recognition. Verse 24 looks like a reference to John 20.3, and verse 12 above is sometimes condemned as spurious on the ground that it only mentions Peter, whereas the present context proves that Luke knew the full facts. But it seems as if Luke were here simply translating, or incorporating, a document which had come into his possession, very much at full length; it refers to "Simon" in verse 34, whereas verse 12, following Luke's usage, has "Peter". Difficulties have been raised over verse 28, as over Mark 6.48—can we suppose that our Lord used deception? But the picture corrects itself if we imagine it happening; the conversation prolonging itself at the garden gate, and the polite gesture of self-dismissal the Stranger makes as he murmurs, "Well, I must be getting along now". It is the courtesy of Jesus Christ; he will not burden them with his company if it is not wanted. That the bread-breaking of verse 30 is to be understood, as in Acts 2.46 and elsewhere, of a Eucharistic action, was the opinion of the older commentators, at least in the West, but it seems difficult to substantiate. The appearance to Simon mentioned in verse 34 is independently attested by I Cor. 15.5, but without detail.

24.36-53. *The appearance in the upper room.* This is presumably to be identified with the appearance described in John 20.19-23, and alluded to in I Cor. 15.5. All through this last chapter the Western manuscripts, or some of them, omit verses or phrases which our other authorities include. There are short formulas omitted, not greatly affecting the sense, in verses 3, 6, and 9; there is the whole of verse 12; and in this concluding section the "Western text" leaves out "And said, Peace be upon you" in verse 36, the whole of verse 40, the words "and was carried up into heaven" in verse 51, and the words "bowed down



to worship him" in verse 52. This is the more remarkable, because it is more usual to find that the Western text retains (or inserts) what the Eastern text omits. Some eminent scholars have maintained that Luke evidently brought out a second edition of his work, with slight additions here and there; both alike are authentic. It is, however, a suspicious circumstance that these "Western non-interpolations" never tell us anything we cannot find elsewhere. The words "He is not here, he has risen again" in verse 6 look as if they came from Mark; verses 12 and 40, together with the additional words in verse 36, are reminiscences of John; and the fact of the Ascension, though the formula of it is unusual, is already known to us from Mark 16 and from the Acts. Thus we cannot exclude the possibility that some copyist made bold to round off the story by importing into the text of Luke fragments of information which he had gleaned elsewhere.

This doubt obviously raises the question, Does verse 51, as Luke wrote it, describe a scene of temporary parting on Easter Day, or the Ascension which took place (Acts 1.3) forty days later?

On the one hand, there is no clear indication, between verse 44 and verse 49, that several weeks have elapsed. Luke had it in his mind to describe the Ascension at the beginning of the Acts; why should he be at pains to describe it twice over? We only think that the Ascension is referred to, because some officious copyist has let in the words "and was carried up into heaven. So they bowed down to worship him".

On the other hand, Luke often seems to string his paragraphs together without much regard for chronological order; otherwise it would be difficult to harmonize his account with those of the other Evangelists. In Acts 1.2 he claims to have written an account of our Lord's life till the day when he was taken up. And the two concluding verses of the Gospel obviously anticipate the interval between the Ascension and Pentecost. Is it not more natural to suppose that Luke *is* describing the Ascension? Only some officious copyist, influenced by the difficulties alleged above, struck out the words "And was carried up to heaven. So they bowed down to worship him", and obscured the obvious meaning of the passage.

On the whole, it seems probable that Luke did mean to end his Gospel with the Ascension, and that either the end of verse 43 or the

end of verse 49 marks a tacit pause in the sense. It may be that he was hoping to come across eye-witnesses who would be able to supply him with fresh stories of the Risen Christ, but somehow the opportunity was not granted him. Or it may be that he was putting together his material, here and elsewhere, from some collection of our Lord's sayings, which ran straight on without marking a pause from what our Lord said on Easter Day to what he said forty days later. It is even possible that there is a gap in the text, and that we ought to mark an omission after the word "nations" in verse 47; the grammar is highly suspicious. At least we know, from the Acts, that he did not merely make a mistake; that he did not intend to give us the picture of our Lord ascending at midnight on Easter Day.

Whether the disputed phrases given in the Eastern text really come from Luke's own hand is a different question. It is fortunate, even if it is not significant, that those who reject them as spurious can still find Scriptural authority elsewhere for the information they afford.

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN

1.1-18. *The Incarnation.* In verse 1, "God had the Word abiding with him" is literally "the Word was to God"; but wherever this preposition is used after a verb of rest in the New Testament, the emphasis is on *continued* residence, e.g. Matthew 13.56, "Are not his sisters in and out among us all the time?" Here the continuous Being of the Word in his Divine Nature is contrasted with his coming-to-be as Man in time, verse 14. All through this passage a strong contrast is drawn between being (eternally) and coming to be. It is possible to punctuate verses 3 and 4 differently, "and without him came nothing. All that has come to be (i.e., all creation) was, in him, life"; but it seems unlikely that the Evangelist, in this passage, would use the word "was" of something which merely "came to be". In verse 5, "master it" may be understood in the sense of understanding it, or in the sense of prevailing over it, "overtaking" it (cf. 12.35 below). The latter interpretation is perhaps the more probable.

In verse 9, the Greek can be rendered, and is now usually rendered, "The true Light, which enlightens every man, was (then) coming into the world". But this, an excellent rendering in itself, surely neglects the rhetoric of the passage; verse 8 corrects a possible false impression, verse 9 gives the true state of the case. John the Baptist, true enough, was a lamp lit to shew men the way (5.35 below), but he was not the real light, the light properly so called. The Light properly so called was that Light which enlightens every man (not simply the Jewish people). So in 6.32, where the key-word "real" appears as it does here. "The bread that comes from heaven is not what Moses gave you. The real bread from heaven is given only by my Father. God's gift of bread comes down from heaven and gives life to the whole world". The close parallelism between the two passages suggests that the Vulgate (with nearly all the ancient versions) is right in construing "coming into the world" as agreeing with "every man". Long since, the Divine Wisdom,

though it ruled in the hearts of men everywhere, could find no rest until it found a home in Israel (Ecclus. 24.10.13). It was to this home in Israel that the Incarnate Word came, and found no welcome from the men of his own household.

In verse 13, there can be no doubt that the Virgin Birth is referred to, if only by implication. To do full justice to John's thought, we should have to render "their birth, *like his*, did not come from ordinary human generation". It is a characteristic of the Fourth Gospel, to be always disturbed by these overtones of meaning. Thus chapter 3 begins with a long mystical disquisition on baptism which does not mention baptism, and most of chapter 6 is occupied by a sermon on the Holy Eucharist which does not mention the Holy Eucharist. For the purposes of his argument, it would have been sufficient for John to write, "their birth came not from men but from God". It is because the Virgin Birth is in his mind that he makes use of a more elaborate formula. Meanwhile, a single early Latin version reads not "their birth came", but "his birth came". This solitary variation is supported by a surprisingly constant tendency among the earliest Fathers to quote the language of verse 13 as applying, not to the Christian, but to Christ. And Tertullian assures us that the plural verb was a false reading deliberately introduced under heretical influence.

It is, of course, possible that Justin, Irenaeus, etc., only *applied* the words of verse 13 to our Lord on their own account, without meaning their readers to suppose that John had so applied them. But it is strange that there should be such a conspiracy of misquotation; nor does it appear that the later Fathers followed this early example. It is more natural to suppose that there was a variant in the text, at a very early date. If so, which is the right reading, and how did the wrong reading arise? Quite possibly, the word "blood" was misunderstood; John had used it of physical origin in general, and in that sense had written that our Lord was not born from the mingling of two family strains (the word is in the plural) after the wont of men; but this looked as if he denied that our Lord was truly born of his Virgin Mother, and the sentence was altered in the interests of orthodoxy—hence the plural reading. On the other hand, John's mind may have been occupied (here as so often in his epistles) with the thought of the Divine sonship



accorded to the believing Christian. And he may have written "which children (in the neuter) were born . . ." etc.; in this case, by Greek usage, the verb would be in the singular. A slight fault or even obscurity in the written text might then lead one copyist to give "who were born", and another to give "who was born", as the probable correction of it.

Whichever way he actually put it, the thought in John's mind was that Christians are mystically, as Christ was literally, virgin-born; their part, like the mother's part, is purely receptive (verse 12), the only Agent in this spiritual birth being Divine (verse 13). There is still, perhaps, an echo of the great Wisdom-hymn in Ecclesiasticus when the Word is described as pitching his tent among us; so Wisdom moves her encampment from heaven to Israel; Ecclus. 24.7, 12, 13. (Verse 12 of that passage reads, in the Greek, "he fixed my tent"; the Latin rendering "he fixed his tent in me" has probably been influenced by the doctrine of the Incarnation.)

"He was when I was not" in verse 15 is literally "he was first of me"; cf. notes on Matthew 26.17-35. The simplest way of interpreting the difficult phrase "and grace instead of grace" in verse 16, is perhaps "each of us has received—our part is still that of recipients—the gift of grace in proportion to the graciousness of the giver". (Any suggestion of one kind of grace being substituted for another seems foreign to the context.) In verse 18 several of the best manuscripts, with the support of many Fathers, read "only begotten God" instead of "the only-begotten Son".

1.19-34. *The witness of John the Baptist.* The Baptist has been quoted in verse 15 as acknowledging the pre-existence of the Divine Word (cf. 8.58 below). Verses 19-28 are a kind of footnote, supplying the context of the quotation. "The prophet" in verse 21 is a reference to Deut. 18.15-19. The same reference recurs in 6.14 and 7.40 below; otherwise we have curiously little evidence that the Deuteronomy passage was a subject of special interest in our Lord's time. Why are the Pharisees suddenly mentioned in verse 24? No suggestion that this is a fresh deputation, or that the Pharisees, present throughout, have been silent till now, suits the context. The fact ought to have been mentioned in verse 19, where it has point; the Pharisees were not strong

among the priestly caste—it is from a small and pious section that the questioners come. Why, then, is this piece of information delayed? We shall find constant difficulty in understanding these sudden excursions of the author's mind, unless we remember that he was a very old man, and had some of those tricks of reminiscence which come with old age. He will make a point of bringing in some apparently unimportant detail, as if to demonstrate the accuracy of his own memory. But sometimes these details do not recur to his mind until he has already passed the point at which they should have been mentioned; he puts them in nevertheless, not at the place where they belong, but at the place where they were remembered.

In what sense does the Baptist call our Lord (in verse 29) "the Lamb of God"? The prophecy of Isaias about the lamb being led to the slaughter was early applied to our Lord by Christian exegesis (Acts 8.32), and no doubt some thought of the Paschal lamb entered into the picture (John 19.36). But would the Baptist have anticipated this notion? His idea of the Christ seems to be that of a severe Judge (Matthew 3.12); surely it is only by an anachronism that the Fourth Gospel makes him talk like this? To avoid the uncomfortable inference, orthodox commentators have suggested that the figure of the Lamb here has nothing to do with sacrifice, or with the slaughter-house; it is the type of innocence. By his own sinlessness, this Man who is greater than John will take away the sins of the world. An excellent alternative; but is there any evidence that the Jewish mind saw in the lamb a type of innocence? The word "meek" is a mistranslation in Jeremias 11.19; the point there is that a caded lamb, brought up in the farmer's back-yard, has no fear of human beings and goes to the slaughter-house unsuspecting. Only in the apocryphal Psalms of Solomon (8.28) do we find a solitary reference to lamb-like innocence. Meanwhile, the mention of a "sheep that is led away to the slaughter-house, lamb that stands dumb while it is shorn" in Isaias 53.7, followed almost immediately in verse 12 by a reference to "bearing the guilt of his people", can hardly have been without its influence on the present passage; coincidence will not account for it.

An alternative possibility remains—that we ought to think of the Baptist's utterance as a sudden inspiration. *He* had studied Isaias care-

fully, even if the men of his day had not; he had read his own destiny there, and why not (confusedly at least) the destiny of his Successor? When he baptized our Lord, a heavenly revelation was granted him (verse 32); it may have revised his Messianic ideas. The very act of baptism may have put him in mind of the lambs that are washed at their first shearing; with one of those sudden apperceptions which are the basis of prophecy and of poetry, he cries out, "This one is God's own Lamb—the one that stands dumb when it is shorn! Do you remember? He is to bear many sins, we are told that". How much, if at all, he himself understood the doctrine of the Atonement when he spoke, is another question. Not impossible that John should become an unconscious prophet, if Caiphas did (11.50 below).

Assuming that the Baptist's words are an echo—even though it should be an unconscious echo—of the 53rd chapter of *Isaias*, we ought, perhaps, to translate "who takes upon himself the sins of the world". The meaning of the Greek verb used here is ambiguous, but there is no doubt that the *Isaias* passage refers to the "bearing" of guilt.

The account given of our Lord's baptism in verse 32 compares curiously with that given by the other Evangelists. Luke tells us that heaven was opened, and the Holy Spirit came down in bodily form like a dove, and there was a voice from heaven. Mark tells us that "he"—almost certainly our Lord himself—saw heaven opened, and the Spirit coming down like a dove, and (there was) a voice from heaven. Matthew writes "behold, heaven was opened, and he—probably our Lord, but possibly the Baptist—saw the Spirit coming down like a dove, and behold, a voice from heaven". In the Fourth Gospel, there is no reference to heaven being opened, or to a voice from heaven. It is probable that the first three Evangelists are describing what our Lord saw; a revelation meant in the first instance for himself. He must have told the story; we cannot be certain, therefore, whether anything that passed was visible to the Baptist, apart from the descent of the dove. This was enough; it was the sign he had been told to expect. He was now prepared to bear witness that our Lord was "the Son of God"—the Messiah, certainly, and perhaps something more. (Some manuscripts, however, give "the Elect of God".)

1.35-51. *The first disciples.* John tells his story, as is usual with him, in great detail, yet without presenting a picture to the imagination. He tells us nothing about the nature of the place where our Lord lived; he assures us that the two disciples stayed with him "all that day", and then adds, recollecting the matter more precisely, that they only reached the place at four in the afternoon. That the unnamed disciple was the Evangelist himself is a natural surmise which we have no means of verifying. If the word "first" in verse 41 is the true reading, we might be inclined to suspect that John meant to add "and afterwards the other disciple found *his* brother James"—did he forget to make the addition? Or leave it out so as to preserve his anonymity? But the reading of a few versions "early in the morning" instead of "first" is probably accurate; the word would easily get changed. It is quite impossible to identify this narrative with that of Matthew 4.18-22; when our Lord called St. Peter and St. Andrew away from their nets, they were not strangers, but friends made in Judaea. The ministry, as the Synoptic Gospels understand it, did not begin till after the Baptist was imprisoned (Matthew 4.12), and this event cannot be placed earlier than 4.3 in John's narrative. It is a real difficulty to determine how John can write about our Lord's "disciples" four times over in chapter 2, and again in 3.22, although the Synoptists give us the impression that he did not begin to make disciples till later. We have to allow for a kind of pre-ministry which intervenes between the Temptation and the arrest of John the Baptist. Of this interval, the Synoptists have left us no record, unless we include our Lord's first sermon at Nazareth (Luke 4.14-30) as part of it. Perhaps, at this time, the "disciples" formed a kind of Third Order, intermittently in attendance on their Master, but not yet men who had given up all to follow him.

It is not clear whether "thou shalt be called" in verse 42 means "your name from now on is Cephas" or "you are the one to whom I will be giving the name of Cephas later on". The latter interpretation would fit in with the apparent sense of Mark 3.16, viz. that the name was not actually bestowed until the moment when the Apostles were set apart for their mission; but in Matthew 10.2 we get rather the impression of a nickname which was already in vogue. "Follow me" in verse 43



need not imply a solemn call; the beginning of the verse suggests that it only means "Come to Galilee with me". Verse 44 is a delayed footnote, like verse 24 above; logically, "from Bethsaida" ought to have come in verse 40. The conjecture that Nathanael was the same as the Apostle Bartholomew is plausible, but cannot be proved. "The Son of God" in verse 49 is probably meant only as a Messianic title, "the King of Israel" being its synonym.

The last verse of the chapter is perhaps the most obscure. Inevitably we are reminded of Jacob's ladder, with the angels of God going up and coming down (Gen. 28.12), but this does not help us to determine what greater sight it was the Apostles were one day to witness. Some commentators understand a general reference to the miracles which our Lord did during his life on earth, or to the grace which he has bestowed upon his Church since; but something more in the nature of a spectacle seems to be demanded by the context. The analogy of Matthew 26.64 would suggest that our Lord is speaking of his Second Coming. But the Second Coming is uniformly prophesied in the New Testament under the same image—that of our Lord returning from heaven to earth accompanied by the Angels. The Second Coming envisaged by the present passage would have to be a descent of the Angels "upon" a Son of Man, presumably conceived as already on earth.

Meanwhile, there is one other utterance of our Lord's, recorded by John, which has unmistakeably the same rhetorical formula. In 6.62, when our Lord detects incredulity in some of his disciples after the discourse about "bread from heaven", he issues the challenge, "Does *this* try your faith? What will you make of it, if you see the Son of Man ascending to the place where he was before?" Is it not at least arguable that the Ascension is referred to in *both* passages? If, in prospect, the Ascension was the event most calculated to try the faith of the sceptic, would it not be, when it happened, the event most calculated to confirm such faith as that of Nathanael? It is true that the angels of Acts 1.10 did not appear till after the Ascension was over, and probably did not appear up in the air. But we must not press the language of prophecy too closely. Angels flying up to heaven to escort our Lord on his progress, Angels flying down from heaven to reassure his followers—that will be the picture intended; we need not complain if, in fact, the Apostles only

saw part of it. "Upon" remains a difficult turn of phrase, but in the Greek the preposition used can equally bear the sense of *motion towards*, and in the Aramaic which our Lord originally used the implications of the word may have been even vaguer.

2.1-12. *The wedding-feast at Cana.* Our Lord's question in verse 4 could grammatically mean, "What does that matter to you and me?" But the idiomatic use of the words is unmistakeable; he must have been understood as meaning, "What is there in common between you and me?"—a formula of protest. When there is aggression on the part of a neighbouring tribe (Judges 11.12), when bloodthirsty advice is volunteered (II Kings 16.10), when a self-invited guest has brought bad luck (III Kings 17.18), when counsel is asked from one whose counsel has been neglected (IV Kings 3.13), when a bystander interferes in a quarrel that is not his own (II Paralip. 35.21), "What have I to do with thee?" sums up the situation. So the unclean spirits (e.g., in Matthew 8.29) affect to regard our Lord's gesture of exorcism as somehow an infringement of their rights, "What have we to do with thee?" The general sense, then, is "Why should you come interfering?" In the present passage, a serious rebuke would evidently be out of place; our Lord speaks with a smile, as he tests the faith of his suppliant, with the intention of granting the request later on, as in Matthew 15.26, John 4.48, 11.23. "Don't come bothering me just now" would perhaps be the effect in modern speech.

But why "not just now"? The interpretation "I shall find an opportunity to do something later on" is just possible as a matter of Greek; cf. "your opportunity" in Luke 22.53. But such a way of talking would be unnecessarily solemn; nor does verse 7 suggest that there was in fact any considerable interval. The "hour" referred to by the Gospels, especially by the Fourth Gospel, is the decisive moment of our Lord's Passion, considered perhaps as the birth-pangs of the new kingdom (cf. 16.21 below). The considerations which would enable us to connect the miracle at Cana with our Lord's Passion are somewhat far-fetched. But it is quite possible that he is thinking of his ministry and his Passion as a continuous whole, a crowded hour of struggle and failure; and in this sense his objection becomes intelligible. He ought not to be asked

to do a miracle yet, because his short and tragic career as a miracle-worker (Luke 13.32, John 9.4) has not yet properly begun. The devils in Matthew 8.29 are perhaps similarly represented as taken by surprise; they did not know that the ministry of healing had already set in.

Why were there exactly six water-pots? Why was no comment aroused, when the servants began (apparently) serving the guests with water from this source? Why was it necessary to produce a hundred and twenty gallons of wine, when the guests had drunk deep already? All these anomalies disappear from the narrative if we adopt Bishop Westcott's reading of it. He points out that the word "draw" in verse 8 is normally (in the Bible, always) used of drawing water from a well or fountain. Which (he argues) is what the servants were told to do, and did. They filled the six urns, and then started drawing from the well again; "Draw out *now*". If this view is right, we see the force of the six water-pots; it was the seventh draught from the well that was miraculous. Just so, it was at the seventh challenge that the walls of Jericho fell (Jos. 6.15 sqq.), it was not till he had climbed Carmel seven times that Elias' servant saw the rain coming (III Kings 18.43), and the leper must wash seven times in Jordan if he is to be cleansed (IV Kings 5.10).

"His disciples learned to believe in him" in verse 11 seems to denote the psychological moment at which the act of faith was made. The phrase constantly recurs all through this Gospel, and in the Acts; it refers, regularly, to belief in Jesus as being the Christ and the Son of God (9.35, 11.27 below). Nathanael has already made this confession, 1.49 above, but perhaps in a moment of astonishment, without proper reflection. John's evidence on this subject should warn us against supposing that the confession of St. Peter (Matthew 16.16) marks the first dawn of complete faith in the Apostles; it is only the first public admission of it.

2.13-25. *Our Lord cleanses the Temple.* Did this happen once, or twice? And if the event described in Matthew 21.12 sqq. is the same as the event described here, why does Matthew put it at the end of the Ministry, and John at the beginning? (Both Mark and Luke are here in full agreement with Matthew.)

Only three explanations of the difficulty present themselves as likely, and in the absence of any outside evidence, every reader of the Gospels must make his own choice between them.

(A) That our Lord cleansed the Temple on two separate occasions. That his protest should need to be repeated is in no way remarkable; that John, writing after the other Evangelists, should not comment on the fact of its repetition, is not more puzzling than the silence of the Evangelists in similar circumstances elsewhere. In chapter 21, he does not observe that there had already been a miraculous draught of fishes (Luke 5), although the two occasions are plainly different; neither he nor Matthew nor Mark, in describing the anointing at Bethany, gives a reference to the concluding passage in Luke 7; neither Matthew nor Mark recalls the miracle of the Five Thousand in recording the miracle of the Four Thousand (Matthew 14 and 15). But in all these cases there are differences, as well as resemblances, which strike the eye; whereas John describes the cleansing of the Temple just as the Synoptists do. An instinct of economy makes us reluctant to duplicate the story, if it can be helped.

(B) That John is right in his chronology; it was a Prophet hitherto almost unknown who made this gesture at the very outset of his ministry. In that case, we must suppose that the Synoptic tradition depends on some document which simply narrated the event without giving any information about its context. The earlier Evangelists will have recorded it just after the Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem because that was the only entry into Jerusalem which figured in their narrative. Contrariwise, there was no temptation for John to correct the traditional chronology, unless he happened to know that it was inaccurate. The chief difficulty about this explanation is to understand why the correction was not supplied beforehand. Luke, in the later part of his narrative, so often shews himself independent of the Synoptic tradition; how was it that here he followed the Synoptic tradition so blindly?

(C) That the event is misplaced in the Fourth Gospel. This may imply that the text of the Fourth Gospel, as we have it, has suffered from some very early dislocation; John himself is not likely to have made a mistake of this kind through sheer ignorance. The theory of an early dislocation has often been advanced on other grounds. But it



is not easy to conceive how an accident of this kind could have happened, at so early a stage in the transmission of the text that it has left no mark either on the manuscripts or on Patristic tradition. Nor does the passage, verses 13-25, fit in very well into John's narrative, e.g. at 12.19; verses 55-57 of chapter 11 have so emphasized the near approach of the paschal feast, that a rubric like that with which the present passage opens (verse 13) would seem quite out of place. Possibly, however, John "released" his reminiscences piecemeal, and the disciples who copied them down did not always understand what period he was speaking of.

Verse 19 probably gives us the exact text of the remark which was used as evidence against our Lord at his trial; in Matthew (26.61) his accusers have construed it into "the temple of God", Mark has perhaps supplied a foot-note of his own (14.58; see notes there). Verse 21 perhaps implies that our Lord pointed to himself as he uttered the words; this would account for the fear expressed in Matthew 27.63. There is no reason why our Lord should not have referred to his body as a temple, if St. Paul referred to his as a tabernacle (II Cor. 5.1; cf. II Peter 1.13). If the Jews, in verse 20, refer to Herod's Temple, which was not yet complete, they must mean "has been a-building", and this would fix the date of the utterance as A.D. 27 or 28. But the inference is uncertain; our Lord may have been referring to the re-building of the Temple after the captivity in Babylon, which seems to have been completed 46 years after the decree of Cyrus.

3.1-21. *The interview with Nicodemus; an appendix.* If we have concluded (see notes on 2.13-25) that the latter part of chapter 2 has been accidentally misplaced, and really belongs to chapter 12, we shall be inclined to guess that the present passage, down to verse 15, has been misplaced too; 12.20 would follow on it easily enough.

"Anew" in verse 3 can also be rendered, in the Greek, "from above"; no doubt our Lord meant it in this sense, and Nicodemus misunderstood him. In verse 5, the Greek has "spirit" not "the Holy Spirit", and it is doubtful whether our Lord is not simply contrasting, here as in verse 6, spiritual with natural birth. The sense of verse 6 (though the form of the sentence somewhat disguises it) is clearly "Spiritual birth

is a real thing, like natural birth". Verse 8 is a major difficulty; ought we to translate the first noun of the sentence "the Spirit" or "the wind"? At first sight, the fact that the same word is used at the end of the sentence to mean "spirit" is decisive. But we read in 7.39 below that the Spirit "had not yet been given to men, because Jesus had not yet been raised to glory"; why then should Nicodemus be criticized (verse 10) for not understanding all about it? Nor (unless we count 20.22 below) is there any passage in the New Testament where the Holy Spirit is described as "breathing" or "blowing". It seems, then, that the rhetoric of the verse involves a play upon words; the "breath" in the sense of wind blows where it will . . . so is everyone who takes his birth from the "breath" in the sense of spirit.

But does "the wind" really give a good sense here? No wholly satisfactory answer has been found to St. Augustine's objection; viz., that almost the only thing we *do* know about the wind is whence it comes and whither it goes. So far as Greek is concerned, the wind is mentioned some thirty times in the New Testament, and not once by the word here used. But the essential difficulty lies deeper. Our Lord appears to be saying that the behaviour of persons acted upon by the Holy Spirit is as unpredictable as the wind; has this really anything to do with the context? The point to be established is that spiritual regeneration is a fact, no less than natural birth. The activities proper to spiritual regeneration are not in question; and if they were, they should be illustrated by the activities proper to natural birth, not by atmospheric conditions. Verse 8, thus interpreted, is a loose leaf in the argument.

A suggestion which deserves far more attention than it has received is that of Maldonatus, that "breath" here simply means "breath"—the breath of life, as in Matthew 27.50 and Apoc. 11.11. The mysterious phenomenon of animal life appears capriciously, granted to man or horse, denied to tree or stone. You can verify its presence, most obviously, by that expulsion of the breath which produces animal sounds, but you cannot tell how it comes (Ezech. 37.10) or how it goes (Ps. 145.4). So it is with the spiritual re-birth; it is granted, you cannot tell why, to one man, not to another. This interpretation seems to satisfy the requirements of the context, without doing violence to the language or forcing the thought of the sentence.

Why is the plural used in verse 11? Our Lord never uses the royal "We", never associates his disciples with himself under a single formula; a reference to his heavenly Father would be out of place here. The suggestion that the Evangelist is interpolating an observation of his own (cf. I John 1.1) and attributing it to our Lord is desperate criticism; surely he would have had the sense to alter "we" into "I". It is important to remember, here as so often in John, that we are not reading a conversation but fragments of a conversation; our Lord must have been saying much more, which has passed unrecorded. What was it about? Almost certainly he had been referring to the Old Testament; why else should a teacher of Israel be blamed for his imperceptiveness? And, since his talk was of the new birth, he will probably have been quoting passages from the prophets which represented the saved remnant of Israel as a people new-born; such passages as the 37th chapter of Ezechiel, where the winds bring life into the valley of skeletons, or the beginning of Isaias 54, quoted by St. Paul in this sense (Gal. 4.27). Having thus acted as the interpreter of the Old Testament prophets, it would not be altogether strange if our Lord associated them with himself as his fellow-witnesses. "You, a teacher in Israel, have never really read Isaias or Ezechiel; you will not take their word for it any more than mine, when I speak to you of the new birth".

Verses 13 to 15 are evidently spoken by our Lord, not by the Evangelist; the title "Son of Man" is never accorded to our Lord except by himself. But their connexion with what precedes is not obvious, and if they were uttered on the same occasion, it is probable that there are gaps in the report of this interview which we have no means of filling up. Verse 13 runs literally "No one has ever gone up to heaven save he who came down from heaven", but this is an eccentricity of Hebrew idiom; cf. Matthew 12.4, Luke 4.27, Apoc. 21.27. The sense is clearly "No one has gone up, although the Son of Man *has* come down". Our Lord could not truthfully speak of himself as having gone up to heaven; nor would this have any bearing on the discussion. There is no doubt a reminiscence here of Deut. 30.12. The words "who dwells in heaven" are omitted by some of the best manuscripts; they may originally have been a variant reading for "who has come down from heaven", or they may have been misread by a copyist as such. In verse

14, the reference to Num. 21.9 seems to make it clear that "lifted up" refers to the Crucifixion (cf. 8.28, 12.32), not to the Ascension.

Verses 16-21 can, if necessary, be read as quoted from our Lord's lips; but it seems more probable that the interview with Nicodemus comes to an end at verse 15, and is followed by a short theological passage of John's own authorship. The Greek word for "judgement" or "rejection" means literally "a sifting", "a sorting out"; there is thus a kind of play upon words running through the passage; our Lord's first Coming was not designed to *incriminate* men, but it did inevitably *discriminate* between men; their reactions towards the Christ automatically sorted them out into two classes, and thus for all intents and purposes a judgement had already taken place. These reactions John describes (by a return to the image of 1.5) in terms of light and darkness. Men can, or cannot, "stand up to the light" (as we say) when the Light comes.

3.22-36. *Self-effacement of John the Baptist; an appendix.* When we are told that our Lord "came into the land of Judaea", our instinct is to suppose that he had hitherto been elsewhere, e.g. in Galilee. If we are prepared (see notes on 2.13-25 above) to regard the Cleansing of the Temple as an episode accidentally misplaced in John's narrative, all this is easy enough; the interview with Nicodemus took place in Galilee, during the brief sojourn mentioned in 2.12, and now our Lord goes *back* to Judaea. As the text stands, we get the picture, rather clumsily expressed, of a departure from Jerusalem itself into the country parts of Judaea. The ministry proper is still a thing of the future, and we cannot be certain that the "disciples" mentioned in verse 22 were the men afterwards chosen to be Apostles. Possibly, verse 24 was put in by John with the express intention of warning his readers that they have not yet arrived at the Synoptic point of departure.

The story is told with much vagueness, even for John. What had "the Jews", or rather (according to the more probable reading) "a Jew", said or done to precipitate any kind of tension between John's disciples and our Lord's? Why are we told that he was a Jew, rather than a Gentile? Was the dispute with the Jew about baptism? The word "purification" by itself would rather suggest ceremonial cleansing,



as in 2.6 above—the subject of controversy would be that elaborately explained in Mark 7.2–5. Possibly we are meant to understand that John sent some of his disciples to ask our Lord for an opinion about the matter under dispute, and that they realized for the first time, in the course of this visit, how the popularity of the new Prophet was threatening to overshadow that of his Forerunner. The mention of the bridegroom's voice in verse 29 reminds us of passages like Jer. 7.34, where the "voice" of bridegroom and bride is a symbol of merry-making; the noisy approach of the bridal party is perhaps alluded to (cf. Matt. 25.6, where it stands for a type of the Advent).

Verses 31–36 might be taken as part of what St. John the Baptist said, but they are more likely to be a fresh theological excursus by the Evangelist. In some ways it is connected with 16–21, rather than with 22–30, verse 32 being a deliberate echo of verse 11. Verse 33 is puzzling. We can understand the logic of I John 5.10, where it is argued that to disbelieve in Christ is to disbelieve in the Father; it is an *a fortiori* argument, a *reductio ad absurdum*. But in this passage John appears to say that to believe in Christ is to believe in the Father; it is difficult to see any logical value in the process. Probably we are meant to lay stress on the verb "to declare" (literally, "to seal"). Everybody believes in God, and is ready to declare his belief; but it is only when he goes further, and accepts Christ, that this declaration of his becomes sealed, signed and delivered. In the last part of verse 34, the best Greek manuscripts omit the word "God", leaving us free to choose which Person of the Blessed Trinity is the subject of the sentence. We may render "so boundless is the gift God makes of the Spirit (to Christ)", or "so boundless is the gift which he (Christ) makes of the Spirit (to us)", or "so boundless is the gift the Spirit makes (to Christ? Or to us?)". The first rendering is probably right, in view of the context; "Christ's words are God's words, because God has bestowed the Spirit upon Christ in an unlimited degree". But an author more sensitive than John to the reader's difficulties would not have omitted the operative word in the sentence.

4.1–26. *The Woman of Samaria*. The rubric in verse 1 is vague, in John's manner; nothing has been said about the Pharisees in 3.26, but

the text somehow manages to give us the impression that it has. Evidently our Lord does not wish to be in competition with John, while John is still at liberty. For Jacob's bequest, see Gen. 48.22, Josue 24.32. "There, then" in verse 6 is literally "Thus, then", a turn of speech repeated in 13.25 (where it is hardly translatable; the implication seems to be "you can picture the scene for yourselves" rather than "just as he was"). In asserting that he has the power to give her living water, our Lord is claiming a sort of Divine prerogative (cf. Jer. 2.13, 17.13). The word used for "gift" in verse 10 occurs four times in the Acts, always with reference to the gift of the Holy Spirit; the thought of baptism, which figures so prominently in chapter 3, was no doubt in our Lord's mind. What was in the woman's mind? She does not seem to understand the "living water" in a spiritual sense, even when our Lord has described it in verse 14 as "a spring of water within". Perhaps she regards him as a Visionary with queer ideas, and thinks it best to humour him.

"The water I gave him" in verse 13 should be compared with "the bread which I am to give" in 6.52. In Ecclus. 24.29 Wisdom says "Eat of this fruit, and you will hunger for more; drink of this wine, and your thirst for it will be still unquenched"; why does our Lord say of the living water (but not of the living bread) that one experience of it will preclude all further appetite? Presumably because baptism is an initiation which cannot be repeated; cf. Heb. 6.4.

It is possible that part of the conversation has been suppressed after verse 15, and that the command "Go home, fetch thy husband" was less abrupt than it seems. There is no abruptness about the woman's reply in verse 19; she is masking her embarrassment by the affectation of a desire to talk theology with one who is so evidently a prophet. After all, she suggests, if orthodoxy is only a question of the place where you go to worship, may not one party be right as well as the other? "Our fathers" are the patriarchs, common ancestors of the Jews and the Samaritans. Our Lord's answer has the effect of lifting up the conversation beyond the sphere of controversy; yet it has, in itself, a controversial bearing. He does insist, in verse 22, that the difference between Jewish and Samaritan religion is not, as the woman thinks, a merely geographical one. Either nation worships the same God, but

he is a God of whom the Samaritans know practically nothing; whereas the Jews do know a certain amount. The Samaritans accepted the law, but not the prophets, and were therefore strangers to the Jewish theology of the day. They believed in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but not in the God who promised redemption to Israel—salvation, after all, belonged to the Jews. It is in answer to this implication that the woman, in verse 25, asserts her belief in Messiah—that is, no doubt, in the “Prophet” of 1.21 above (see notes there). He will “tell us everything”; he is to come, like Moses, with a new revelation.

All that our Lord says in verses 21 sqq. about the universality and the spirituality of true religion is thus parenthetic to the discussion itself. Our Lord has been leading the woman on to admit that she, though a Samaritan, looks forward to a Messiah. Then he discloses himself. The formula is literally, “I, who speak to thee, AM”, and some think that the constant use of the words I AM on our Lord’s lips in the Fourth Gospel is a deliberate assertion of Divinity (see Exodus 3.14). In any case the woman must have understood our Lord as meaning “I am the Christ”. Why does our Lord divulge his Messiahship to the woman of Samaria, and again to the man born blind (9.37 below), whereas in the Synoptic Gospels he forbids his disciples to publicize the fact (Matthew 16.20), and remains a riddle to his contemporaries on the testimony of the Fourth Gospel itself (10.24 below)? It can only be surmised that he was confident the news would not spread; a Stranger lodges for two days in a Samaritan village, and the rumour goes round that it was really the Messiah—would anyone at a distance believe it?

4.27-42. *Return of the Apostles; reflections on their mission.* “To the woman” in verse 27 is literally “to a woman”; there is no definite article in the Greek. This inevitably suggests that the disciples were surprised to find him talking to one of the opposite sex. It seems to have been a point of etiquette with the Rabbis not to be seen talking to a woman; it was undignified. But we have no ground for supposing that our Lord was expected to follow the Rabbinical code, or that John’s Gentile readers would know about it. The meaning may be that the disciples were surprised to find a woman there (or anyone, for that

matter) talking to our Lord; they had left him alone, and expected to find him alone when they came back. "The woman" to us, she was "a woman" to them, because they had not seen her before. There were moments, it seems, at which the readiness of the Apostles to ask questions was restrained by a sense of awe; cf. 21.12 below. The woman's suggestion in verse 28 must not be translated "Is not this the Christ?" It is rather "Can this conceivably be the Christ?"—his claim has not altogether convinced her.

The Samaritans are already on their way out of the city when our Lord is urged to take his mid-day meal; it is this interview—perhaps his first experience of addressing a "multitude"—that inspires his refusal; to be doing his Father's will is meat and drink to him. In verse 35, "Harvest won't be for another four months yet" is obviously a proverb, unknown elsewhere, but fully in line with such aphorisms as Prov. 20.4; the point is, "No hurry; it's only seed-time as yet; the harvest is a long way off". But in this matter of the Messianic kingdom we are not to be taken in by catch-words of that kind; you look round in seed-time, and the fields are white to harvest already. (The word "already" is treated by some versions as part of verse 35, by others as part of verse 36; probably it applies to both, and may even have stood, in the original, twice over.) Already the harvest is about to be reaped, the wages are about to be paid, which will last eternally (verse 36); seed-time and harvest-time are one, so that sower and reaper keep a joint festival, instead of two separate ones (that is surely the meaning of "rejoice together"). The implication seems to be, the Last Judgement follows so quickly upon the preaching of the Gospel that there is, for practical purposes, no interval between them; hence comes our Lord's urgent sense of mission. But indeed (verses 37 and 38) it will not be our Lord himself who does the harvesting; the Apostles will be the reapers, and find themselves in the proverbial position of those Israelite invaders (Jos. 24.13) who entered Chanaan at the time of harvest (Jos. 3.15) and so entered into other men's labours. This seems to attach coherent sense to a passage which has given rise to a multitude of rival interpretations. The plural, "others", in verse 38 possibly associates St. John the Baptist with our Lord in the work of "sowing". For the reference to approaching judgement, see notes on Matthew 24.1-25.



4.43-54. *The healing of the nobleman's son.* There is nothing whatever to be said for identifying this miracle with the healing of the centurion's servant (Matthew 8.5-13 and parallels). They have nothing in common except the circumstance that the cure, though instantaneous, was effected from a distance.

The rubric in verses 43-45 has given rise to many strained interpretations. But two things seem clear, (i) that "his own country" must refer to Nazareth or to Galilee, not to Judaea, (ii) that verse 44 gives the reason for the fact stated in verse 43. Are we then to suppose that our Lord went to Galilee in order to avoid popularity and publicity? This would be wholly out of keeping with the Synoptic picture. It is simpler to hold that he went there in order to vanquish the coldness with which he had *hitherto* been treated. He has won a limited success in Judaea (2.23-25), and a local triumph in Samaria (4.39-42); now he will see what can be done to soften the hard hearts of his own fellow-countrymen.

The "nobleman" of verse 46 should rather be described as one of the king's men, i.e. he was in attendance on Herod, the tetrarch of Galilee. It is perhaps in this sense that our Lord says "You people must see signs and wonders done, or there is no making you believe"; the superstitious curiosity of Herod's nature may be alluded to (Luke 23.8), and indeed the cure here related may have led to Herod's speculations about the "powers" which were active in the new Prophet (Matthew 14.2). The apparent reluctance shewn by our Lord is in line with 2.4 above and 11.23 below; cf. also Matthew 15.26. To render verse 50 "thy son is alive" is to make nonsense of it; the father himself has already implied as much in verse 49. The meaning is "thy son is destined to live", as in 20.17 ("I am about to ascend") and 21.23 ("this disciple was not destined to die"). The courtier and his household "learned to believe" like the Apostles in 2.11 (see note there).

5.1-15. *Miracle of the paralytic.* At this point in the Fourth Gospel there is a strong case for suspecting that there has been a dislocation in the text. We have only to put chapter 5 after chapter 6, and we have avoided three awkward transitions in the narrative. Why, in 6.1, are we told that our Lord retired across the Lake of Galilee, when we last met

him (chapter 5) not in Galilee but in Judaea? Why, in 7.1, does our Lord decide to keep away from Judaea and make Galilee his centre, when Galilee has already been his centre in chapter 6? And why, in 7.23, is the healing of the palsied man still a burning question, when a visit to Galilee and the miracle of the Five Thousand have intervened between chapter 5 and chapter 7? Transpose chapters 5 and 6, and all these difficulties are ironed out. But the whole structure of the Fourth Gospel is so loosely knit that considerations of this kind do not carry a great deal of weight; we are dealing with a series of random reminiscences, not with a formal biography. If we transpose the two chapters, it will be natural to identify the feast mentioned in 5.1 with the pasch which is described as "nearly approaching" in 6.4. As the text stands, we should more naturally take it to be some lesser feast—perhaps the Pentecost which followed on the Pasch of 2.23; this would mean a gap of nearly a year between chapter 5 and chapter 6, which has to be filled in from the Synoptists.

Verse 4 is of very doubtful manuscript authority, even in the Latin text, and some of the best Greek manuscripts also omit the last clause of verse 3. Why should the words have been interpolated? Perhaps there was some lingering tradition about the properties of the pool, which induced a copyist to write in a foot-note; a foot-note is certainly demanded by verse 7, but we cannot be sure that John himself would have been at pains to supply one—it would be rather unlike him to supply it so early on in the story. The reference to the sins of the *miraculé* in verse 14 might equally have been thought to demand an explanation.

5.16–30. *The Son as life-giver and judge.* All through the rest of this chapter, and most of chapters 7 and 8, our Lord is represented as engaged in controversy with the Jews of Jerusalem, about his mission from the Father and his mysterious claim. Whereas in the Synoptic Gospels we have heard him preaching to crowds, we must now think of him as faced by a small knot of theologian critics, perhaps with a wider fringe of auditors who overheard, but did not interrupt him. That he is conversing, not preaching, and conversing with people of sufficiently agile minds, is no doubt the reason why we get so few

echoes, here, of the teaching recorded for us by the Synoptists. Probably we should think of these chapters as a series of extracts, remembered here and there, from much longer conversations, and we must not expect the transitions from one point to the next to be such as we can easily follow.

The argument of verses 16-23 is that God never ceased from activity, in spite of the metaphor which describes him as "resting" on the sabbath day; he is at work continually in the conservation of all created things. The life of Christ incarnate is a continuation of that ceaseless activity; he "can only do what he sees his Father doing" (verse 19), not in the sense that he originates no independent action of his own (that is not the point as yet), but in the sense that he must needs go on working because he sees his Father going on working. When our Lord restores life to the wasted limbs of the paralytic, and threatens him with worse punishment if he sins again, that is only a specimen of those "greater works" (verse 20) which are entrusted to him—a general commission to give life to the believer, to judge the impenitent. This idea is enlarged upon in verses 24-30, where it is explained that the "life" in question is not mere physical activity, nor the "judgement" merely temporal judgement, as in the case of the paralytic; eternal life and eternal condemnation are at stake.

In verse 27, the reason given, "since he is the Son of Man", is not immediately clear. At first sight, it looks as if emphasis were being laid on our Lord's complete Humanity; but it is difficult to see why in the nature of the case it should be specially appropriate for man to be judged by Man. More probably, "Son of Man" is used here as a title of the Messiah, taken from Daniel 7.13. Whether our Lord's audience understood him in that sense, is a different question.

5:31-47. *Our Lord brings forward his credentials.* There is no close connexion between this passage and that which precedes it; indeed, the words may have been uttered, for all we know, on some quite different occasion. The Jews, perhaps, had been reiterating their demand for a "sign" which would be the guarantee of our Lord's mission (cf. 2.18 above); why, after all, should they accept his bare word for it that he had come to give life, that he was empowered to judge, etc.? This

challenge he answers, first, by appealing to the testimony of the Baptist. If they had really listened to the Baptist, they would have seen in him a beacon-light, the herald of good news; instead, they were content to warm their hands at the fire, and let it rest at that. Next, our Lord appeals to his own miracles; those "actions" of his which shew forth, under their eyes, at once the proof of God's power and the type of God's beneficence. Then he adds, in verse 37, that the Father "himself" offers a third kind of testimony. He is not content to supply that miraculous power which can be misrepresented as diabolical influence; he will interfere, somehow, more directly.

What is the nature of this interference? The answer is commonly given, "It is a kind of prophetic insight, communicated to the soul, which enables men to recognize the truth; that, surely, is the meaning of I John 5.9 and 10". But this will not do; whatever be the meaning of I John 5.9 and 10, the testimony to which our Lord is appealing *here* must be something external. There would be no point in his appealing to a prophetic insight residing in the hearts of his critics, since he goes on to say, in verse 38, that no such insight is there. No, if they had the prophetic gifts even of that heathen necromancer who "heard the words of God, and looked on the vision of the Almighty" (Num. 24.4), that would have been enough. Lacking those gifts, they must fall back on prophecy at second-hand—on the study of the Old Testament; this is the testimony our Lord is now appealing to (verse 39). Our Lord himself has no need of testimony from without (verses 34, 40), but the Jews ought to be looking out for it (verses 42, 43). Instead of which, they are prepared to take anybody at his own valuation, as long as he does not claim a Divine mission, but only to be honoured as a Rabbi (verses 43, 44). Moses, who prophesied the coming of a later Prophet like himself (see on 1.25 above), is sufficient proof that they are going the wrong way about it.

The first verb in verse 39 might, grammatically, be a command, but the run of the sentence forbids us to take it so. In verse 43, the phrase "some other, if he comes in his own name" is often interpreted as looking forward to the "false Christs and false prophets" of Matthew 24.24. But (apart from the question whether this would be a true description of such people) verse 44 seems to imply that "some other"



means "some other like yourselves". Our Lord is not talking to prophets, but to Rabbis, and the implication is surely, "You would welcome me readily enough, if I claimed to be merely a Rabbi like yourselves; it is because I claim to be a Prophet, like Moses, that you, in your blindness, reject me". The rhetoric of verse 47 suggests a contrast between "writings" and "words"; if this is meant, the insinuation will be, "How could you be expected to pay attention to these words of mine, which die away on the air, when you pay so little attention to the writings of Moses, which are there, put on record, and indeed are your constant study?"

6.1-14. *Miracle of the Five Thousand.* See notes on Matthew 14. 13-21, Mark 6.30-56, Luke 9.7-17. For once, and for the first time since our Lord's baptism, John returns to the Synoptic tradition. Here, as at the beginning of chapter 12, he is closest to Mark's narrative; there is no question of the two hundred pennyworth of bread (verse 7) in Matthew or Luke. But the detail is one which John might have remembered for himself—he is evidently recalling the scene in detail; and there is no correspondence of language with the Synoptists (here so closely in line) apart from a few operative words which were bound to come in. It is unsafe, therefore, to assume that John is deliberately trying to soft-pedal the Eucharistic associations of the miracle when he does not tell us, as the Synoptists do, that our Lord lifted up his eyes to heaven, or that he broke the bread. He alone has told us that the Pasch was close at hand; he alone (but cf. Matthew 15.36) uses the actual word "eucharist" in this connexion. It is simplest to suppose that John is telling the story in his own way; that he omitted the lifting up of the eyes, because it was a characteristic habit of our Lord's (Mark 7.34, John 11.41, 17.1) which did not need special mention, and that he took the breaking of the bread as something inevitable in the circumstances.

For the rest, he tells the same story as the Synoptists, with a few added details; Philip and Andrew figure in the narrative for the first time, and so does the boy who provided the loaves and fishes; we are told that the crumbs were picked up at our Lord's own command, and what reason he gave for it. The comment recorded in verse 14 is

more significant, since it explains what follows. The Synoptic record has constantly brought to our minds the thought of Moses; was it only a coincidence that our Lord fasted forty days, that he issued a new set of commandments on the mountain-side, that his face was transfigured, that he satisfied the needs of his hungry followers by a miracle? But the first three Evangelists do not suggest, as John appears to suggest here, that the parallel was noted by our Lord's own contemporaries; that if the Jewish theologians had not sufficiently noticed the resemblance (cf. notes on the last section) there were simple-minded Galileans who had noted it all too carefully, and were ready to act on it all too literally. If this was a second Moses, ready to lead out his people into the desert, it only remained to make a king of him.

6.15-25. *Our Lord walks on the water.* See notes on Matthew 14.22-36, Mark 6.30-56. The Synoptists (cf. notes on Matthew) only record what orders the disciples had, to cross the Lake while their Master remained to "send the multitudes home" (or perhaps we should render "take leave of the multitudes"). Actually, it is clear from John's account that the multitudes had no intention of going home; they remained there with our Lord as a kind of hostage on the mountain-top—the boat gone, he could not give them the slip. He did, however, give them the slip by walking across the sea. Verse 17 seems to imply that the disciples hoped he would come with them in the boat after all. They loitered about over the embarkation, and began their voyage with regretful glances behind them; it was dark already, and still he had not come.

A curiously misplaced effort has been made by some writers to prove that in the Fourth Gospel there is no miracle, no walking on the sea. The words John uses in verse 19 might equally well be rendered, "they saw Jesus walking by the sea shore", as (presumably) in 21.1. But this is to miss the whole point of John's story; in verses 22-25 it is made clear that, on the day when the Five Thousand were fed, only one boat was present, the one which our Lord was using. The Galileans saw it leave without him; so they waited till next day, when boats came over from the Western shore to take them home; and their first astonished question on meeting our Lord at Capernaum was "Master, when

didst thou make thy way here?" The solution of their difficulty was that our Lord had walked across the sea.

As usual, John has not told his story very lucidly; he has not explained (in verse 25) *why* the multitudes were surprised to see our Lord back at Capharnaum. Our first impression is that it would be difficult for him to have made the journey overland so quickly; but this, as a matter of mileage, is quite untrue—the Lake of Galilee is only thirteen miles long, and less than seven miles across. Evidently the questioners assume that he would not have undertaken a night march; why should he? They are only surprised that he should have made such an early morning start; they ask "When did you get here?", not "How did you get here?" Only John mentions that our Lord returned to Capharnaum; this creates a difficulty if we read Luke 9.10 as implying that the miracle of the Loaves took place near Bethsaida Julias. The journey, by sea or by land, between Capharnaum and Bethsaida would be less than five miles, and a boat making the passage could not possibly be described as being "in the middle of the sea" (Mark 6.47). Clearly, whatever confusion may have arisen in Luke's text, or even in Luke's mind (see notes on Luke 9.7-17), the miracle of the Loaves did not take place at or near Bethsaida Julias, but at some point at least half way down the eastern shore of the Lake, more easily reached from Capharnaum by a voyage than by walking round the Lake.

In verse 21 "they took him on board willingly enough" is literally "they were willing to take him on board"; but John's use of the verb does not always imply a frustrated wish (5.35 above, 8.44 below; cf. Mark 12.38).

6.26-52. *Our Lord claims to be the true Bread from heaven.* Verses 26 to 59 form, in appearance, a continuous discourse, three times punctuated by murmured interruptions. It is not always easy to disengage the pattern of it. Verses 36-40, and again verses 44-46, break up the argument in a disconcerting fashion, and we are tempted to wonder whether John has not inserted them here out of their true context, after the manner of the Synoptics. In any case, it is not certain that we are dealing with one continuous discourse. At the beginning of it, in verse 26, it has the air of a quay-side conversation with a few disciples who have

just crossed the Lake; by the end of it, in verse 60, it appears as a sermon preached in the synagogue. Meanwhile, it falls into two parts, with the division in the middle of verse 52. The first part, which we are at present considering, is not precisely sacramental teaching, but rather mystical teaching with a sacramental background. A man who knew nothing about the Holy Eucharist might read it and think he had penetrated the whole meaning of it, just as a man who had never heard of baptism might think he had penetrated the whole meaning of 3.1-15 above.

The rebuke of verses 26 and 27 is best understood symbolically; our Lord is disturbed by the earthly-minded ambition on the part of his followers which would make a king of him. The thirst of the Samaritan woman masked a craving for sensual pleasure, the hunger of the disciples masks a craving for political aggrandisement. Political activity is not the service to which the true kingdom is calling them. Just as the woman of Samaria appealed to Jacob (4.12), so here our Lord's questioners appeal to Moses, the man who gave them bread from heaven. Like the Pharisees just after the miracle of the Four Thousand (Matthew 16.1) somebody chooses this apparently inappropriate moment to demand a sign; no doubt they mean a sign from heaven, like the manna. Probably the interrupter is not a disciple at all; our Lord, in any case, takes no notice, but develops his theme. In verse 34 it is the disciples who interrupt, but half-banteringly, like the woman of Samaria in 4.15.

Verses 36-40 would be more suitably placed in almost any other context; they would fit in uncommonly well, with their reference to "seeing" and "casting out", at the end of chapter 9. But John may have included them here because he was suddenly reminded of them, e.g. by the reference to "coming down from heaven". Or he may have left out part of the conversation which would have enabled us to see their relevance.

In verse 42 John, who is ordinarily in line with Mark, follows Matthew and Luke in calling our Lord the son of Joseph (Matthew 13.55, Luke 4.22; cp. Mark 6.3). He prefers a historical to a theological statement; after all, it was what the Jews said. It would be unsafe to assume that St. Joseph was still alive; "we know" may imply knowledge of a fact, not of a person. The thread of the argument seems to be



dropped at verse 43 and resumed at verse 47; verses 44-46 have again the air of an insertion. They would come in more naturally, for instance, after verse 38 of chapter 5, "Not that anyone has seen the Father" being a foot-note to 5.37. But once more we have to allow for some echo in John's memory, or for some omitted passage in the conversation which would have made things clear to us.

6.52-72. *Our Lord's teaching about the Holy Eucharist; effects of the discourse.* So far, in calling himself "the bread of life", our Lord might have been understood as speaking metaphorically, as when he calls himself "the door" in 10.9, or "the true vine" in 15.1. We should expect him to go on and develop the metaphor, thereby softening the outlines of it, as when he speaks of the Good Shepherd in chapter 10, or of the True Vine in chapter 15. Instead, he insists upon a more literal interpretation of what he has been saying than his audience had hitherto envisaged. He tells them, not simply that they are to eat his flesh, but that it is "his flesh (given) for the life of the world"; he omits the word "given", precisely as in St. Paul's account of the Last Supper (I Cor. 11.24). It is the flesh of his Passion; flesh and blood are separated, in token of death. To "eat" a man's "flesh" can only be used metaphorically when it means taking away his good name (Daniel 3.8, 6.24); to "drink" a man's "blood" has no parallel at all in Jewish metaphor, and was a phrase calculated to alienate the sympathies of a Jewish audience (cf. Acts 15.20). Nor does John use the same Greek word for "real", in verse 56, as he uses in 1.9 or 15.1, the same word as he has used in verse 32; he does not suggest that our Lord's flesh is food, our Lord's blood is drink, *in a higher sense*. He makes it clear that this is food and drink *which cannot deceive us*. In a word, everything indicates that our Lord is not using metaphor, but is talking strictly sacramental language.

Some commentators have suggested that verses 52-59 cannot really belong to their present context; they may have been, perhaps, our Lord's own commentary on the occasion when he instituted the first Eucharist, but he is not likely to have uttered them publicly, before a largely hostile synagogue, in Capharnaum. But this is to reckon without verse 53, which commits the credit of the author to the state-

ment that our Lord was addressing, not his chosen Apostles, but "the Jews". At the same time, it is probable that verses 61-66 refer, not simply to the sacramental utterance which immediately precedes them, but to verses 26-59 in general. Verse 63 obviously goes right back to verse 42; it comments, not on the question "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" but on the question "What does he mean by saying, I have come down from heaven?" The people who are scandalized by hearing him talk about coming down from heaven will be (not more scandalized, but) ashamed of having been scandalized, when they see him returning to the heaven whence he came. (Cf. notes on 1.51 above.) Again, in verse 64 the word "flesh" is not used in the same sense as in verses 53-59. Here you have the Pauline use of the word "flesh" which contrasts it with "spirit"—unaided nature instead of nature transformed by grace. And this, in turn, goes right back to the beginning of the discussion, in verse 27. What our Lord detects in some of his followers is a generally unsupernatural outlook which works only for earthly rewards, which turns away, not merely from his Eucharistic teaching, but from his life-giving words altogether.

In verse 70 some of the best manuscripts have "the holy one of God" instead of "the Christ, the Son of God". It is probable that "the Christ, the son of God" has been brought in from Matthew 16.16, under the impression that this is John's version of the scene at Caesarea Philippi. If that impression is true, John has evidently condensed his narrative at this point. The allusion to the traitor in verse 71 is peculiar to John; in the other Gospels there is no prophecy of the betrayal until Maundy Thursday.

7.1-13. *The feast of Tabernacles*. Four major difficulties are raised by this brief passage. (A) Who were the people who advised our Lord on this occasion? (B) What was the motive underlying their advice? (C) What were the exact reasons they alleged? (D) What was meant by our Lord's reply, in view of his subsequent conduct?

(A) In 2.12 we have been told that after the miracle at Cana "he went down to Capharnaum with his mother, his brethren and his disciples, not staying there many days". We have been told in the preceding verse that our Lord's disciples "learned to believe in him" at

this point, and perhaps we are meant to assume that his "brethren" (that is, kinsfolk; see notes on Matthew 13.53-58) did *not* learn to believe in him. This is picked up in 7.4, "even his brethren were without faith in him". But, on the assumption (see notes on 19.17-27 below) that James the son of Alphaeus and (possibly) Jude the brother of James were at once our Lord's cousins and his disciples, the picture becomes somewhat confused. Presumably, here as in Matthew 12.46, we have to reckon with a *conseil de famille*, from which James and Jude, if they were really our Lord's cousins, would be tacitly excluded.

(B) The motives for the suggestion must be judged by the general context. We have no reason whatever to suppose that it was made in mockery, still less in hostility. Our Lord's family did not "believe in him" as the Christ, the Son of God; but they knew him to be a miracle-worker—"if thou must needs act thus", is as much as to say "since thou dost act thus"; probably, since the miracle of the Five Thousand, they thought of him as a popular hero with remarkable gifts of leadership. They are still full of the political ideas which our Lord is bent on discouraging; perhaps there may even be something in that talk of making him a king . . . But not while he is content with hole-and-corner triumphs in Galilee; if he wants to make himself famous, he must begin doing wonders in Jerusalem, and at the feast.

(C) The text at the end of verse 3 is certainly corrupt. "Go to Judaea, so that thy *disciples* too, even thy *disciples*, may see thy doings" makes nonsense. Commentators usually explain that the word "there" (i.e., in Judaea) has to be supplied. But if we supply it, the whole emphasis of the sentence is changed; it becomes "so that *there* too, even *there*, thy disciples may see thy doings". To omit "there" is to omit the operative word in the sentence; it is safe to say that nobody, writing in any language, could be guilty of such a blunder. And why "disciples"? The point of miracles was to *make* disciples; and the Jews of Judaea who believed in our Lord had already seen his miracles—that was what made them believe (2.23 above). Possibly what John wrote was not "disciples" but "haters". The word, it is true, does not occur anywhere in the Greek of the period, but it is a simple and a regular formation; it would be a natural way of rendering the phrase "hating ones" which occurs so frequently in the Psalms as a synonym for "enemies". If there

is a reference to "hating" in verse 3 it explains (what is otherwise inexplicable) why our Lord should begin to talk about "hating" in verse 7. The unfamiliar formation, differing only by two letters from the word "disciple", would certainly be altered to "disciple" by the first copyist who found it in the Greek text of the Gospel. "Go into Judaea, so that even your enemies may see the marvellous things you do, and be convinced. You must have a world for your audience".

(D) They are politicians, and, as is the way of politicians, opportunists; a moment can be easily chosen for their purposes; our Lord must await the hour of destiny (verse 6). The world (he picks up the word from verse 4) is their friend; it will never be his friend, because he is always pointing out (cf. 6.27 above) that its activities are mischievous (verse 7). He is not joining in *this* pilgrimage, he is waiting for another feast—the pasch of next year—to make his public and decisive appearance in Jerusalem (verse 8). Some manuscripts have "I am not going up yet to this feast", probably out of a mistaken desire to safeguard our Lord's veracity. But the statement is, in fact, unexceptionable. "To go up" is technical language for going up on pilgrimage; our Lord does not mean to enter Jerusalem with a caravan of pilgrims who will wave palm-branches and shout Hosanna—not at this feast. An incognito visit was, from his family's point of view at the moment, no visit at all.

Verse 13 has "for fear of the Jews", obviously meaning "for fear of the Jewish rulers". Thus it would appear that "the Jews" in verse 11 are to be distinguished from the "multitudes" of verse 12. This is good proof that when he describes our Lord as arguing with "the Jews" (even in Galilee perhaps, cf. 6.41 and 53) he has the Jewish leaders in his mind, rather than the rank and file.

7.14-31. *It does not matter if the Emissary is simple and obscure; ask who it was that sent him.* Verses 19-25 are not conspicuously relevant in their present position. The back-reference is plainly to 5.16. Assuming that there has been no dislocation, the underlying thought seems to be "You take me for an illiterate man, who knows the Law so little that he performs cures on the sabbath. Are you so illiterate as not to know that the Law forbids murder?" But the ostensible connexion (though



it is only expressed by the words "Did not Moses give you the law?") is rather that Moses is adduced as an example of a faithful emissary; and the mention of Moses leads on to a discussion about circumcision and the sabbath. Probably the conversation has been very much fore-shortened. Verse 27 presents a surface difficulty; *did* the Jews of Jerusalem know where our Lord came from? They professed not to (9.29 below). To the chagrin of his kinsfolk, our Lord has not come into Jerusalem—this time—preceded by crowds shouting "This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee" (Matthew 21.11). But evidently he was a public figure; "It is the Galilean" men will have said to one another. In that sense, they knew where he came from, but meanwhile he *came from nobody knew where*; academically, he had no status.

At the moment, the grievance is that a man with demonstrably human origins should claim to be the Christ, come down from heaven. Our Lord replies, in verse 28, "When a messenger comes to you, not in his own name but in somebody else's, what you have to consider is not the character of the envoy, but the authority of the sender. The trouble is, not that you know me so well, but that you know my Father so little". If they knew him better, they would know him for a "genuine" Sender; apparently in the sense of one who can claim authority. (The question of our Lord's *credentials* is not discussed here; it has been dealt with in 5.31-42.)

7.33-53. *Abortive attempt at an arrest.* The Synoptic Gospels do not suggest that the idea of "laying hands on" our Lord occurred to the Jewish authorities till some time in Holy Week (Matthew 21.46 and parallels). John evidently has better inside information than the other Evangelists; possibly when they wrote Nicodemus, or some other like him, was unwilling to publish his reminiscences. It is likely enough that if our Lord had been arrested at this stage, the result would only have been an examination before the Council (cf. Acts 4 and 5).

The use of the present tense in verse 34, "where I am", not, as in 13.33, "where I am going", was no doubt associated in our Lord's own mind with the fact that as God he was already and always in heaven; it is doubtful whether the people to whom he was speaking did not

suppose him to be using the present for the future, as in verse 8 above and in Luke 1.34. In verse 38, the words "fountains of living water shall flow from his bosom" do not occur anywhere else, and the parallel passages adduced are very distant parallels. It seems doubtful whether we ought not to redistribute verses 37 and 38 by repunctuating thus: "If any man is thirsty, let him come to me and drink (the man, that is, who has faith in me) as the Scripture has bidden him. Fountains of living water shall flow from his bosom". The reference thus becomes a perfectly plain one; see Isaias 55.1. Verse 42 is a fine piece of tragic irony; there is no reason to doubt that John enjoyed it, and no reason to think that he invented it—the prophecy quoted from Michaeas in Matthew 2.6 being everybody's property.

8.1-11. *The adulteress.* This whole passage, including verse 53 of chapter 7, which belongs to it, is of doubtful origin, although it ranks as inspired Scripture. It has the appearance of a fragment extracted from some longer document, and if it had turned up unexpectedly might well be identified by its vocabulary as a lost section of Luke. Indeed, a few Latin manuscripts do insert it at the end of Luke 21; it would perhaps fit in better after Luke 20.26. But if it stood in the sacred text originally, it must have been very early lost and suffered a long eclipse. All the best manuscripts except one omit it; the Fathers, especially in the East, are mostly unconscious of its existence; the manuscripts which include it shew numerous variations of text, as if it had been preserved at haphazard. That it was written by John seems hardly credible, as a matter of language and usage; cf. the use of "Master" in verse 4, whereas John always has the Hebrew form Rabbi. That it was foisted into the text of John by some clumsy imitator, is hardly more probable. Rather, it will have been a fragment of some very early Christian document, which came adrift and fell into discredit. Quite possibly from Luke; it is to Luke, and the influences which inspired him, that we owe the story of the penitent woman at the Pharisee's house, and the Prodigal Son, and the prayer, "Father, forgive them". It may have been a page that came loose by accident; it may have been deliberately cut out from copies designed for public reading, in days when Church discipline was strict. As a fragment of uncertain origin, it was not too carefully

copied or translated; one copyist saw a chance of inserting it here (perhaps to illustrate the words "I do not set myself up to judge" in verse 15), another at the end of Luke 21. But it was not allowed to perish.

The woman is not brought to our Lord for trial; it is a test question, in the manner of, and perhaps belonging to, the series of test questions which are propounded in Matthew 22 (Mark 12, Luke 20). It is an old tradition, but perhaps resting only on a guess, that our Lord wrote on the ground the sins of the woman's accusers—a detail which has even found its way into some manuscripts. Our Lord's challenge in verse 7 is probably an invitation to the accusers to examine the state of their consciences about grave sexual sin (cf. Luke 7.39), not necessarily about adultery.

8.12-20. *Our Lord and the judgement of his contemporaries.* Admittedly, verse 12 does not fit in well at the end of verses 1-11; if we assume that the story of the adulteress is wrongly placed here, we are still left with the reflection that it does not fit in well after 7.45-52. It looks as if John had put together, in this chapter, fragments of our Lord's conversation with the Jews which he does not connect with any particular setting. The vagueness of the opening rubrics (verses 12, 21 and 31) and of the closing rubrics (verses 20 and 30) warns us not to look for a continuity of thought between the three sections of the chapter which, in any case, we should look for in vain.

Verse 13 refers us back to 5.31; the Jews are quoting his own earlier admission. Our Lord does not, this time, seek to construct a convincing legal defence; when he invokes his Father's testimony, he is really appealing to a higher Court. The Jews, fond as they are of judging, can take no cognisance here, because they have no knowledge of him or of his Father, who alone can bear testimony to one another (Matthew 11.27). The world whence he came, and to which he goes back (verse 14) is the only fitting place for such discussions; he appeals (as it were) to be tried in his country of origin.

8.21-30. *Our Lord claims to be the Christ men look for in vain.* This passage is of the utmost obscurity. "You will look for me" in verse 21 can hardly mean, "You will look for me, Jesus of Nazareth", as it did

in 7:34. When, and in what sense, did the Jews "look for" Jesus of Nazareth *after* he had been taken away from them? The only reasonable interpretation seems to be "You will go on looking for a Messiah—the Messiah who, though you did not recognize it, is myself—and you will die in your sins (without finding him)". This is emphasized by verse 24: "Unless you come to believe that I am (the Messiah you are looking for), you will die with your sins upon you"—the Jews are to believe in him now, or it will be too late. It is, of course, possible to render "Unless you come to believe that I AM (i.e., I am the God who spoke to Moses)", as in verse 58 below; but it would be more natural for the Jews to understand our Lord as meaning "I am the person last spoken of", as in 13:19 below, where the sense is "I am the person king David was talking about". If the Jews had understood him as claiming a Divine title, they would have taken up stones after verse 24, instead of waiting till verse 58. The same considerations hold good for verse 28; our Lord may have meant in his own mind "I AM", but he will have been *understood* as meaning "I am the Son of Man you are looking for".

The Jews, however, press for a clarification (verse 25), "You are—who?" Our Lord's reply—if it was a reply—is variously interpreted. "I am the Beginning, I, who speak to you" *may* be intended by the Latin, but is an impossible rendering of the Greek. "What I have been telling you all along" makes good sense, but again it misrepresents the Greek. The only adequate account of what the Greek says is "(Who am I, you mean) that I should be speaking to you at all?" But this is not the sense we want, and in any case it is rather stylized Greek for John. ("To think that I should even be speaking to you at all!" has still less to recommend it.)

It almost looks as if there had been some early disturbance of the text, too early to be reflected in our existing manuscripts. It is not merely verse 25 that creates difficulty. Verse 26, which would have fitted in admirably after verse 16, has no relevance here whatever. Verse 27, if we judge by the weight of the manuscript evidence, should read "And they could not understand that he was talking to them about his Father"—this is at least more intelligible than the Vulgate reading, since the word "Father" has not been used since verse 19. But, once more, this



curious stupidity on the part of our Lord's audience is without bearing on the context. It is not till verse 28 that we really rejoin the argument of verses 21-24. The Jews will recognize their error, not as the immediate result of crucifying the Son of Man, but as the result of their bitter experience afterwards, culminating in the destruction of Jerusalem. They will recognize that they were wrong in waiting for some other Messiah to come and deliver them. The second half of verse 28, taken together with verse 29, introduces a fresh, violent change of subject; and some commentators are reduced to beginning a new paragraph with the words "I do not do anything on my own authority". Altogether, verses 25-30 are an enigma. We are accustomed to rapid transitions of thought in John's narrative; but here, if the text is sound, it looks as if we had nothing more than disjointed fragments of a conversation whose drift escapes us.

8.31-50. *God's children and the devil's do not talk the same language.* If the whole section from 31 to 59 is continuous, the rubric in verse 31 is one of the most depressing turns of phrase in all the Gospels. The Jews who were ultimately (verse 59) to threaten our Lord with mob violence were, at least in part, men who had "given him their confidence". True, they had come to "believe him", not to "believe in him" (the more usual phrase), but it is doubtful if we ought to stress the distinction; presumably these are the people who are described in 2.23 as having "come to believe in his name". They believed in him, but he did not believe in them (2.24); and now we are allowed to see that he was right. It is doubtful if we can safely attach a pluperfect sense to the participle, "those who had believed (and had now ceased to believe)", but evidently the seed had fallen on rock.

Verses 31-50 obviously represent a single argument, but as usual there are gaps in it. In verse 34, our Lord is still regarding the Jews as the servants of sin. But in verse 35 he consents to regard them as the servants of God—sons, if they will; was not Ismael both son and servant? But Ismael—here our Lord anticipates the argument of Gal. 4.21-31—could not "make his home in the house for ever". Our Lord himself is the second Isaac, whose spiritual sons will be free men, children of the promise, while the slave-sons of Ismael will be cast out. With verse 37,

a new line of argument appears. Admittedly they are the physical children of Abraham, but if they were his spiritual descendants, their moral features would resemble his; they would have Abraham's faith. And our Lord's word would "hold water" in them (the literal meaning of the odd verb used in this verse) instead of (as we say) going in at one ear and out at the other. Is that happening? On the contrary, they are plotting to murder our Lord, because (verse 38) he speaks a different language from them; he speaks the language of heaven, their actions speak the language of hell. Abraham's features are not recognizable here. At this point the Jews (it seems) clarify the argument by claiming, not simply to be sons of Abraham, but sons of God. That is strange, our Lord comments in verse 42; here am I come from God, standing before you as God's envoy, and yet (verse 43) you and I do not understand one another, we do not talk the same language. No, your father is the devil, and you take after him.

The text of verse 38 is uncertain; instead of "my father" and "your father", some manuscripts have "the Father" in either case; the verb in the second clause will then have to be taken as imperative, "you ought to be doing what the Father has told you", but this is unlikely. In verse 44 a fresh difficulty arises. It appears to say that when the devil lies, he is only acting according to his own nature, since he is a liar, and the father of it—or, possibly, of him. But to describe the devil as a liar and the father of a (second) liar is an outrage upon language; to say that he tells a lie and to say in the same breath that he is the father of it is an awkward mixture of metaphor and plain statement. Moreover, the form of the sentence demands "a liar and father of it", not "a liar and the father of it"; there seems to be no instance in the New Testament where the predicate has an article when the subject of the sentence is unexpressed. And in any case, does this rather laboured description of the devil's activities get us much further? We expect to be told, not something more about the devil, but something about the devil's children.

Probably those scholars are right who insist that the subject of the sentence we are considering is not the devil, but the human liar who takes after him. As the text stands, the change of subject is awkward, but a very slight and natural error in copying may have given us "when

he speaks the untruth" for "when anyone speaks untruth", or for "whoever speaks the untruth". The sentence will now run as follows: "When a man speaks untruth, he speaks according to the activities which are proper to him, since his father (the devil) was a liar before him". This leads on admirably to the verse which follows: "And when I speak the truth, you (being liars by inherited instinct) do not believe me".

Verse 46 appears, at first sight, to consist of two quite disconnected questions. But our Lord, we must remember, is thinking in terms of two camps which do not understand one another—the devil's, characterized by murder and lying, and God's, characterized by life and truth. If our Lord could be convicted of sin, the Jews might plead just cause for wanting to kill him; since they cannot, they are murderers in intention, and therefore children of the devil, and therefore, like the devil, liars. And (verse 47) the words of God, which would rouse an answering chord in the hearts of God's children, sound like a discord to the present audience. The description of our Lord as a Samaritan in verse 48 is sometimes explained as a reflection on verse 40, where he implies doubts about the descent of the Jews from Abraham. But the form of the question shews that the opprobrious epithet has not been devised on the spur of the moment; "you must admit that we are not far out when we call you The Mad Samaritan"—it was a nickname already in use, based on affected ignorance (cf. 9.29 below) about our Lord's origins. But (verse 49) the eccentric is only the man who is different from those around him; if our Lord is treated with little reverence, it is because he, unlike those around him, reverences God.

8.51-59. *Our Lord uses the language of Divinity.* This section looks as if it followed closely on the last, because Abraham is frequently mentioned in both. But this may be the very reason why they have been grouped together; Abraham's name comes up afresh (verse 52) in a quite new connexion. There are, indeed, echoes of the previous conversation in verses 54 and 55, but these verses themselves have no obvious bearing on the context. Apart from this irrelevance, the passage becomes difficult only in verse 56. The sentence is awkward, and would run much better if we could translate "was eager to see my day"; but if this is the meaning, John has chosen an inappropriate word to express

our Lord's thought. A man's day should be the day of his birth (Job 3.1) or of his death (Job 18.20); there seems to be no clear instance in the Bible of "day" in the sense of "life-time". Some commentators have supposed that a revelation was made to Abraham in limbo at the time of our Lord's birth, but more probably we should understand that Abraham foresaw our Lord allegorically in some incident of his life-time; foresaw his birth when Isaac was born, or his death and Resurrection when Isaac was reprieved from sacrifice. Our Lord's utterance was in any case cryptic, and the Jews evidently understand it in the sense that he claims to have been already born when Abraham was still living. It would be a mistake to base any chronological speculations on the words "not yet fifty years old"; it will have been a guess based on the fact that our Lord shewed no traces of having grey hair or being wrinkled with age, fifty being the natural limit to set. In verse 57 one good manuscript and some versions read, "Did Abraham see thee?"—probably a correction to suit verse 56.

Very frequently, in the Fourth Gospel, our Lord is represented as using the words "I am". Sometimes in allegory, as in 10.11; sometimes with the obvious meaning "It is myself", as in 6.20, or with the equally obvious meaning "I am he", as in 18.5 (cf. 9.9). In other cases (cf. verses 24 and 28 above) we cannot be certain *what was in our Lord's mind*, but it does not seem that he was understood by his audience to be saying anything out of the common. Here, in verse 58, he makes an open claim to pre-existence, and is treated as a blasphemer accordingly.

9.1-12. *Healing of the man born blind.* It is hardly necessary, in verse 2, to invoke Rabbinical speculations about the pre-existence of souls, or the possibility of pre-natal "sin" (that is, presumably, some kind of ceremonial fault). The question may well have been put by the disciples (who were not Rabbis) in a *per impossibile* form: "What explanation can be given of such a handicap at the very start of life? Are you going to tell us that he brought it on himself? Would it be fair that he should be penalized for the fault of his parents?" Our Lord does not deal with the general question implied, he only gives an explanation of this individual case. In verse 4, the best manuscript reading is "*We* must work in the service of him who sent me"; our



Lord, here, seems to associate his disciples' action with his own—after all, they too are the light of the world (Matthew 5.14). A slight emphasis falls on the word “we”, perhaps with the implication “*Our* job, yours and mine, is to put things right, not to argue about why they went wrong”. It is useless to speculate whether the sealing of the eyes with clay was or was not an operative part of the miracle. Verse 8 is a very good instance of the way in which John's memory works; he forgets that he has not, till now, described the man as a beggar. “Recovered my sight” in verse 11 is the only possible rendering of the Greek (the Latin is indefinite). Since it occurs at three other points in the conversation, it looks as if the verb had been used deliberately, although apparently so inappropriate. Since eyesight is part of man's natural equipment, John speaks of it as something withheld, not something denied.

9.13-41. *The blind man bears witness to his cure.* In verse 14, as in 5.10 above, the sabbath comes in as an afterthought. In verse 24, “Give God the praise” can hardly be used in the sense of “own up to your fault”, even if this is the true meaning of Jos. 7.19; fault on the part of the blind man is not in question. It is simpler to take the phrase literally, as in Luke 17.18, though here “to God” is by implication emphatic. Verse 29 is to be contrasted with 7.27 above, where see note. In verse 34, the Pharisees are assuming, what the disciples in verse 2 are tacitly questioning, the doctrine that a man's misfortune arises from his fault. “Son of God” in verse 35 should be “Son of Man” according to the more probable manuscript reading. The principle laid down in verse 39 is that by accepting or rejecting Christ a man goes from good to better, or from bad to worse: “If a man is rich, gifts will be made to him . . . ; if he is poor, even the little he has will be taken away from him” (Matthew 13.12, where the same metaphor of *blinding* follows). But what our Lord is specially concerned to point out here is that consciousness of need is one of the good dispositions required of us. “Those who see” are really those who think they see, as we learn immediately afterwards (verse 41).

10.1-18. *The Good Shepherd.* It must be admitted that this passage

opens with startling suddenness; "believe me when I tell you this" is ordinarily the sign that we are in the middle of an argument, but here we are not in the middle of an argument—it is impossible to connect the thought of verses 1-18 with the thought of chapter 9. Some commentators, diagnosing dislocation of the text, would put verses 19-29 at the beginning of the chapter, connecting verse 19 with 9.41; the present passage would follow, as a sort of foot-note to illustrate the metaphor of verses 26 and 27, where "my sheep" are mentioned.

Even as it stands, our present passage falls sharply into two divisions. In verses 1-10 our Lord is the Door of a sheepfold, in which (according to local custom) various flocks would be assembled at night, each waiting to follow its own shepherd out in the morning. He is not yet speaking of *himself* as a shepherd, he is contrasting the shepherds, who (by grace of his permission) come and go on their lawful occasions, with the thieves who try to climb in. If we identify the sheepfold as the Church, we must remember that our Lord always saw continuity between the Jewish people, the "Church" of the Old Covenant, and the new Church he had come to found. Thus verses 1-10 need not be regarded merely as a prophecy of the future. Nor, when our Lord speaks of the thieves and robbers who had "come before him", must we relate them merely to the past. The word "before" has no chronological significance; it is part of the allegory. The thieves and robbers are people who try to get in *without waiting for the door-keeper to open the gate*. Thus the reference will cover unauthorized teachers of any period, but principally no doubt the teachers of our Lord's own day. All through this first allegory, he himself figures only in a passive rôle, as the touchstone by which true and false teaching can be distinguished. It is only with verse 10 that he begins to take his place in the centre of the picture.

In the second part of the allegory, we have to distinguish sharply between two applications of it. As it applies to the human leaders of Christ's flock, it is evident that the two characters of shepherd and hireling exist in fact side by side. But as it applies to our Lord himself, the hireling is a purely imaginary figure, introduced for the sake of contrast. Our Lord is no hireling, he is a true shepherd, and therefore he will lay down his life sooner than fail in his duty towards the sheep

his Father has entrusted to him. At present, they all belong to one assortment of people (evidently the Jews), but he intends to put himself at the head of another assortment of people (the Gentiles); they will all be merged in one assortment henceforward. It makes no difference whether we say "fold" or "flock". The Greek manuscripts, and the old Latin versions we possess, are unanimous in favour of "flock". But the manuscripts which St. Jerome consulted had "fold"; a circumstance which has led to much irrelevant theological controversy, and should rather be regarded as a curious side-light on the uncertainties of documentary transmission.

In verse 14, the emphasis on mutual recognition picks up the argument of 8.31-47; when our Lord speaks, there are those who instinctively listen to him, and it is because they are not of that number—have not, in modern jargon, the right wave-length—that the Jewish leaders are deaf to his appeal. Verse 15 can be, and often is, read as a fresh sentence, "As I am known to my Father, so I know him", but the relevance of this is difficult to see. More probably our Lord is comparing the intimate harmony which exists between himself and his faithful with the intimate harmony which exists between his Father and himself.

10.19-42. *Our Lord asserts his unity with the Father.* The feast of the Dedication was in December, two months later than the feast of Tabernacles (7.2); absorbed in his subject, John has not told us where the interval of time comes in between chapter 7 and chapter 10, or whether our Lord spent the whole of it in Jerusalem. Verses 26 and 27 link up the present section, in logical if not in historical context, with verses 1-19. In verse 29 there is an alternative reading, not so well attested, "My Father who has given to me is greater than all else", but this is probably an effort to simplify a difficult phrase. Assuming that the Vulgate reading is right, ought we to understand, "What my Father has given me, my flock, is more precious than all else"? Or "What my Father has given me, the authority I claim, is more effective than all else"? Conceivably the distinction is unimportant; the true point being that the Father's *act of giving* is irrevocable in its force, so that you cannot take the sheep away from the hand of the Good Shepherd any more than you can take them away from the Father him-

self—which leads up to the momentous declaration, “I and my Father are (literally) one Thing”.

In the discussion which follows (verses 31-42), our Lord’s argument is Rabbinical in form, and appears at first sight disingenuous; is he not pleading a metaphorical use of the word “God” in the Psalms to justify a literal claim on his own part? But it must be observed that the argument of verses 35 and 36 is *a fortiori*; our Lord does not put himself on a level with those national leaders to whom the Psalm referred. They were men to whom God’s word was sent; he is the Word that was sent to them. Verse 41 takes us back, not without some effect of art, to 1.26 above; John had told them he was not the Christ, and sure enough he had not performed the miracles that were expected of the Christ (cf. Matthew 11.5), but as a Fore-runner, he has come up to their expectations.

11.1-16. *The death of Lazarus.* Probably no author except John could have begun his story in this topsy-turvy fashion. Lazarus is introduced to us as a fellow-townsmen of Martha and Mary, and in the next verse *we are expected to know* that he was their brother. On the assumption, made by some commentators, that verse 2 is a note put in, not by John, but by an editor, we should have to wait till verse 19 before we learned, in parenthesis, that there was any relationship between the dead man and the senders of the message. But, as we have seen, this is the way in which John’s memory works (cf. notes on 1.19-34). “There was a man called Lazarus—let me see, where did he come from? Bethany, yes, Bethany, the same place as Martha and Mary, naturally”—his readers are supposed to know, without being told, that they were his sisters.

In verse 2, Mary’s identity is verified by a cross-reference. This is in John’s manner; Nicodemus is identified in 7.50 and again in 19.39, Lazarus himself in 12.1, Caiphas in 18.14, the beloved disciple in 21.20. The note, surely, is John’s; if he says “the Lord” instead of “Jesus”, it is because he is thinking back, not attending, at the moment, to the thread of his narrative. But in this case he is either anticipating what he is going to say in 12.3, or else (contrary to his custom again) referring us to the Synoptic narrative as something already known to his readers. On the latter assumption, he can hardly be alluding to Matthew 26.7,



or Mark 14.3, since there is no mention in either passage of ointment being poured over our Lord's feet; he must be alluding to Luke 7.38, and the identification of Mary of Bethany with the sinful woman becomes evident. On the whole (since the anointing is mentioned before the wiping of the feet) it is safest to conclude that John is referring to his own (subsequent) narrative. This may mean that he produced his reminiscences piecemeal, and only arranged them (or had them arranged for him) afterwards—which might account for some of the difficulties of order already alluded to. See further, notes on 12.1-8 below.

Verse 5 is another afterthought; the fact which it alleges has already been made clear in verse 3. But it has its own place in the story. If we press the Evangelist's language—but he is, in fact, somewhat careless about connexions of thought—we find him saying, "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, and *therefore*, after hearing the news, he waited for two days". The startling fact is that, loving Lazarus with a human love, he yet behaves as the Lord of life and death, biding his own time and not offering any explanations.

No thought of personal danger enters into our Lord's calculations; the time has not yet come when darkness is to have its will (Luke 22.53). The importance of walking while there is still daylight left is stated first positively, then negatively, in verses 9 and 10; it is a form of speech common with our Lord. At first sight, it looks as if there were a contrast between the sunlight of verse 9 and the inner light of verse 10; but it is unlikely that our Lord means us to understand him so; the light of day is thought of as taking possession of the human eye, as in Matthew 6.23. Verse 11 is perhaps best interpreted in the light of Matthew 9.24; physical death has occurred, but in God's design the sentence of death is not to take its course.

11.17-44. *The resurrection of Lazarus.* In verses 23-26, it does not appear on the surface that our Lord makes any promise of restoring Lazarus to the present life. He only corrects Martha's vague Jewish belief in a general resurrection later on, with the assurance that the believer lives on, here and now, in spite of physical death. He seems to be testing her faith by putting her request aside; cf. notes on 2.1-12

above. This contrasts oddly with verse 40, where our Lord seems to refer to a promise already made. Even supposing that the reassurance of verse 4 was conveyed to Bethany by the messenger, that reassurance contains no reference to faith. It looks as if Martha had been meant to read more into our Lord's words about the Resurrection and the Life than she actually did. If she had really believed in our Lord as the Resurrection and the Life, the words "thy brother will rise again" would have been interpreted as "thy brother shall rise again"—here and now. As light must drive out darkness, the presence of Incarnate Life must drive out (even physical) death. From this corollary, Martha evidently shrinks; she makes a formal act of faith in verse 27, and then goes to fetch Mary, who is more competent to deal with this sort of talk (Luke 10.38-42).

In verses 33-35, it seems clear that the Evangelist is underlining the evidences of our Lord's Humanity, to offset the revelation of his Divinity which has been made to us in the earlier part of the chapter. Unfortunately, here as elsewhere (cf. notes on Matthew 26.36-46), we are handicapped by a certain want of precision in the sacred text; what exact force should be given to the verbs in verse 33? "Sighed" represents a Greek verb which has travelled far from its original meaning; it is used of the snorting of war-horses, of violent anger, and in the New Testament mostly of stern admonition (Matthew 9.30, Mark 1.43, 14.5). It is difficult to see, in this passage, how there can have been any occasion for a display of anger. Yet the description, repeated in verse 38, is surely of some outward sound or gesture, not merely of an interior feeling; "with his spirit" must be interpreted on the lines of "groaned aloud with his spirit" in Mark 8.12, and "in himself" in verse 38 will apply to the source, not to the manifestation of his discomposure. On the whole, since the verb literally implies an expulsion of breath, a sigh or a groan seems the most probable guess. The verb rendered by "he distressed himself" might conceivably bear a physical meaning too; perhaps, at the nearness of the conflict between life and death, he shuddered. But fortunately, whatever we make of these two verbs, we are not left in doubt of our Lord's complete Humanity. We know that he wept.

Sigh or groan, it was surely the expression of a prayer (Rom. 8.26,

Heb. 5.7). This is the natural explanation of verse 41; no articulate prayer has been alluded to. Our Lord seems to imply that his act of thanksgiving would have been equally inarticulate, but for the presence of the bystanders (verse 42). The *nuance* of verse 43 has been missed, with curious unanimity, by the translators. The word our Lord uses is not "Come", but "Come hither". It is not a mere summons; it is an invitation.

11.45-56. *Our Lord's death resolved upon.* The calculation brought forward in verse 48 is plainly authentic. The masking of religious persecution under a political guise is a constant fact in history; on the other hand, it is not the kind of argument which a Christian writer would be likely to invent, since it would tend to exculpate the Jewish leaders.

John is evidently impressed by the fact that Caiphas was high priest "in that year"; it recurs in 18.13. Critics who dispute the Jewish authorship of the Fourth Gospel have suggested that "John" was familiar with the process of annual election by which the Asiarchs were appointed at Ephesus, and wrongly supposed that the Jewish high priest was appointed in the same way. But this view, which provides an indifferent explanation of the supposed mistake, provides no explanation at all of the insistence with which John introduces the assertion. Quite possibly he is deliberately correcting some current misapprehension; there may have been legitimists who regarded Annas as still high priest after his *de facto* deposition by the Romans (cf. notes on Luke 3.1-22). The phrase "in that year" would be suggested by the fact that Caiphas himself was deposed soon afterwards, in A.D. 37. John evidently claims (verse 51) that Caiphas was able to make a true prophecy because he was high priest, an interesting precedent for drawing distinctions between the man and his office.

12.1-8. *The anointing at Bethany.* See notes on Matthew 26.1-25, Mark 14.1-21. There can be no reasonable doubt that the same incident is referred to by all three Evangelists. John has followed out the story of Lazarus by describing the scene at Caiphas' house, which took place only two days before the Passion (Matthew 26.2 and 3); now

he returns to the scene at Bethany, which was, he tells us, six days before the Pasch. (Matthew and Mark have in appearance, but only in appearance, post-dated the scene at Bethany; see notes on Matthew.) Mark's additions to the story are repeated by John in detail (verses 3 and 5). One difficulty, however, remains—John tells us that "Mary" anointed our Lord's feet on this occasion, whereas the two earlier Gospels represent her as having poured the ointment, in the traditional manner (Luke 7.46), over his head.

Has John been trying to harmonize two different stories, and made a patchwork job of it? Luke gives us the story of a penitent woman who washed, wiped and anointed our Lord's feet—the normal way of putting a traveller at his ease, except that she washed them with her tears. Matthew and Mark give us the story of a hostess who honoured her guest by anointing his head—a normal compliment, though the great value of the ointment made it remarkable. Did John combine the two stories by way of harmonizing them? If so, how clumsily! He forgot that our Lord was not on his travels, so that the washing of his feet was not in place. He remembered that the woman was not, this time, a penitent, so he omitted the tears. He represented the woman as anointing our Lord's feet *first* and wiping them *afterwards*, contrary to all custom. Then, by way of adding interest to the story, he identified the woman with Lazarus' sister. That is one account of what happened; an alternative has been suggested above, in the notes on Luke 7.36–8.3. There were two separate occasions; possibly both were in the same house, though it is not certain that Simon the Leper was also Simon the Pharisee. On the first, the woman was an intruder, on the second, she was our Lord's hostess; on the first, her behaviour was quite spontaneous, on the second, it was a calculated gesture. Coming in to anoint our Lord's head, she remembered the earlier occasion, and reminded our Lord of it by a sudden, and quite private, variation of the proceedings. She fell on her knees, dropped some of the ointment on his feet, and wiped it off with her hair; it was all over in a moment, but it was just enough to shew him that she had not forgotten. The action probably passed unnoticed by the guests at large; their attention was distracted by the criticisms levelled at the woman, and our Lord's defence of her. John, as usual, preserves the forgotten detail, assuming,



as usual, that both the stories told by the Synoptists are common property.

Meanwhile, he calls her Mary, and evidently identifies her as the sister of Lazarus. He does not explicitly identify her with St. Mary Magdalen; on the contrary, the name "Mary Magdalen" appears quite suddenly in 19.25, with no biographical reference appended in the Johannine manner (cf. verse 2 above, and notes there); and again in verses 1-17 of chapter 20. Curiously it is Luke (8.2) who has given us the formal *dossier* of a character so familiar to Christian piety; this is paralleled by the concluding verses of Mark, 16.9, but Mark 15.40, like Matthew 27.56, introduces her name into the Passion story as if it was that of somebody too well known to need explanation. The first instinct of the reader, therefore, is to assume that the "Mary" of John 12.3 and the "Mary Magdalen" of John 19.25 are two separate people. Against that, you have to set the evidence of verse 7 in the present passage, where our Lord says "enough that she should keep it (the ointment) for the day when my body is prepared for burial". Matthew's version of the saying is rather different, "she did it (poured out the ointment) to prepare me for my burial" (26.12); and Mark has underlined the suggestion, "she has anointed my body *beforehand* to prepare it for burial". It is hard to doubt that John is here supplying a deliberate correction; the form in which the saying had been traditionally preserved was defective. Our Lord had actually prophesied that he was to die, and that "Mary" was to anoint him. There may have been some mystical significance in his words, but they are naturally interpreted as a prophecy. Which implies that either Mary the wife of Cleophas or Mary Magdalen was Mary of Bethany; it is not difficult to choose between the two suggestions.

On the whole, it seems probable that Mary of Bethany was Mary Magdalen; that the common tradition followed by Matthew and Mark had not preserved any record of the fact; that Luke (7.37 and 8.2) was aware of the fact, but for personal reasons was silent about it; that John meant us to make the identification, but from a kind of absent-mindedness (cf. 11.1 and notes there) left us without a direct clue to it.

12.9-19. *Our Lord rides into Jerusalem.* See notes on Matthew 21.1-11, Mark 11.1-11, Luke 19.29-48. If we had only the Synoptists to guide us, we should represent to ourselves the events of Holy Week in the following order: Sunday, Entry into Jerusalem; Wednesday, Council of the priests, followed closely by the Anointing at Bethany.

If we had only John to guide us, we should represent them to ourselves in the following order:

Saturday (or earlier) Council of the priests; followed closely by the Anointing at Bethany; Sunday, Entry into Jerusalem.

But, as we have seen, John probably ante-dated the Council, in order to finish off the story of Lazarus; the Synoptists post-dated the Anointing at Bethany, so as to introduce Judas' treachery, and the reason for it, in connexion with the deliberations of the Council. Thus the true order will be:

Saturday, Anointing at Bethany; Sunday, Entry into Jerusalem; Wednesday, Council of the priests (followed closely by Judas' offer).

Meanwhile, John has given us the whole story in a longer and a juster perspective. From the Synoptic accounts, with their summary treatment of events, we might have supposed that our Lord reached Jerusalem at the head of the pilgrim crowds from Jericho, found the ass, and rode into Jerusalem at their head, all in one day's work. We now see that our Lord reached Jerusalem, argued with the Jews, took refuge beyond Jordan, came back to Bethany to raise Lazarus, and *then* rode into Jerusalem. Accordingly, we find in verse 13 an indication, which is wanting in the Synoptists, that the crowds which accompanied him into Jerusalem had come *out* of Jerusalem to meet him. No doubt they were Galilean pilgrims for the most part, but they were not new arrivals; they had already settled down to make preparations for the feast.

Only John mentions that branches of palm were carried. The branches cut down from the trees on the spot (Matthew 21.8) must have been of some less tropical kind; hence the mention of "palm or olive" in the Liturgy.

12.20-50. *Further public utterances of our Lord.* So difficult is it,

whether in general or in detail, to see the Fourth Gospel as a continuous whole, that some commentators have suspected an early dislocation of the text, and rearranged the various sections accordingly. Even if we shrink from this radical solution (which involves a rather improbable kind of accident), we may question whether the Gospel does not suffer, as a biography, from a certain lack of editorial handling. John may have produced his reminiscences piecemeal, a few sections at a time, and these sections may have been put together, after his death, by disciples who could not be sure where this or that passage really belonged. If so, we should expect a certain confusion at this point. For John has now reached the end of the Ministry, and is about to chronicle the Passion; he has finished with our Lord's public utterances, and is concerned, from now on, with private conversation among a circle of friends. And these thirty verses may well be disconnected fragments of our Lord's public teaching, assembled here because they have not been fitted in elsewhere. Verse 25, for example, is found twice over in the Synoptic record (Matthew 10.39 and Matthew 16.25, with parallels), and we cannot be certain that the Fourth Gospel has preserved it in its historical context.

The Greeks (proselytes, it may be supposed) who ask for an interview make no ripple on the surface of the narrative; the mention of Andrew and Philip takes us back to chapter 1, and, but for the mention of the feast, might be taken for part of its rather inconclusive story. Here, we are left in doubt whether they attained their object or not; "them" in verse 23 probably refers to the two Apostles. It seems to be a confidential interview, with the world shut out; in verse 27, we might think we had reached Gethsemani; then, quite suddenly, we find ourselves in the presence of a crowd of bystanders; with verse 34 the old, pitiless questioning has broken out again. It is possible to read all this as a continuous narrative, but no clear picture emerges from it.

"To achieve his glory" in verse 23 includes the whole process of the Passion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension (cf. Luke 24.26). This is clear from verse 16 above, which implies that our Lord was no longer present on earth; cf. also 17.5 below. In verse 24 "it remains a grain of wheat and nothing more" is literally "it remains itself alone"; the word "itself" is best taken as part of the predicate, not of the subject. How-

ever inappropriate verse 27 may seem in its present surroundings, it can hardly be right to call it "John's account of the Agony"; the transposition would be too violent. Yet we are bound to interpret it in the light of the Agony, and it seems best to take "Save me from undergoing this hour of trial" as a prayer. The rendering "What shall I say? *Father, save me from undergoing this hour of trial?* But I only reached it in order to undergo it" makes excellent sense, but plucks the heart out of a mystery. "What am I to say?" is perhaps a question addressed to the Father; cf. verse 50 below. Verse 29 probably implies that the words spoken were heard, or were understood, only by our Lord himself; cf. Acts 22.9.

Verse 34 seems demonstrably out of its right context. Our Lord has not said, "The Son of man will be lifted up"; he said "If I am lifted up". The Jews not only echo his remark in the wrong form, but proceed to speculate about an ambiguity in his utterance ("What *Son of Man* is this?") which is not in his utterance at all. It looks as if the question must have been raised over 8.28, or some similar, unrecorded utterance. What is quite clear is that the Jews accepted "Son of Man" as a Messianic title and regarded any reference to the Son of Man being "lifted up" as a contradiction of the principle that Christ was immortal. Verses 35 and 36 do not seem to arise out of anything that has gone before. In thought, they are easily connected with 8.12 and 9.39 (not with 9.4 or 11.9, where the metaphor is more general). The warning is addressed to those of our Lord's hearers who will not be given another chance if they refuse belief here and now; perhaps especially to Judas; cf. 13.30. "Children of the light" in verse 36 is an instance of a familiar Hebraism; you are a child of the light if your character takes after the light, just as a man's features take after those of his parents.

Verses 37-43 were obviously meant to be the end of the chapter; verses 44-50 are obviously an afterthought; something got left out and had to be put in after all. This need not surprise us; it is equally obvious that chapter 20 (cf. 20.30, 31) was meant to be the end of the Gospel, and chapter 21 was a postscript which had to be put in after all. Nothing was ever less "edited" than the Fourth Gospel. In verse 40, the quotation from Isaiah 6.10 is worded more uncompromisingly than in Matthew 13.15. But see notes on 9.13-41 above; the lesson is still the



same—that a decisive event like the Incarnation will make a man go from bad to worse if it does not make him go from good to better. Verses 44–50 illustrate this; for the last time, our Lord insists that he has not come—yet—to pass judgement. He has come to bring a message to the world, and by their reactions to it men will stand self-acquitted, or self-condemned.

13.1–20. *The Maundy*. This passage seems to confirm the impression that John wrote his Gospel in two halves; it even suggests the suspicion that he wrote the second half first. The elaborate formula of verse 1 is overweighted, if we think of it merely as the introduction to what was, though a striking gesture, only a gesture. It is rather the preface to a new book, the *Passion according to John*. Men might spurn Christ's love, but it still occupied itself with those who were his own, really his own (cf. 1.11 above); and he would give them the uttermost proof of his love, that is, his death on the Cross (not the Maundy—or, if so, only because the Maundy was the type of his death on the Cross).

It has been suggested (see notes on Luke 22.21–38) that the preface to the Maundy was a dispute among the Apostles, early in the meal, about precedence. In what order, then, did our Lord wash their feet? As usual, John mortifies our curiosity by leaving the matter uncertain. Verse 5 may simply mean that our Lord “set about” washing the feet of his disciples, and verse 6 may imply that Peter was the first he approached. The description is slightly more graphic if we suppose that the process has already begun in verse 5, and that our Lord “came to” Peter in his turn (cf. 19.33 below). In view of the lesson our Lord was inculcating, it seems quite probable that Peter was the last. In verse 6, the emphasized word is “thee”, not “my” (though this is also emphatic); cf. verse 7, where the emphasis on “thee” is repeated. In saying that Peter will know “afterwards” what is the meaning of the ceremony, our Lord may be referring, superficially and in the first instance, to the explanation which is to follow in verse 14. But the word “afterwards” seems to demand a longer perspective; and it is perhaps implied that Peter will *fully realize* (note the change of verb) later on, as servant of the servants of God, what preferment costs.

So far, the bearing of the conversation has been simple and literal

enough. In verses 8-11, it develops an interior significance, and some have thought that our Lord is using directly sacramental language. But this raises a difficulty. If the "washing" of verse 8 is baptism, in what sense can a man be "clean all over" (verse 10) *before* he has received baptism? If the "bathing" of verse 10 is baptism, what are the "stains" referred to? Venial sins? But, if so, how do we interpret verse 8? Or mortal sins? But why should we suppose that the Apostles were in mortal sin? And, in any case, if the baptized person is "clean all over", how is it that Judas was not clean? Had not Judas been baptized? It seems better, then, to say that our Lord is using mystical language with sacramental overtones. We must be content to let grace do everything for us, in spite of our own unworthiness; and at the same time we must be content with the grace that is proportioned to our needs. In verse 10, one good manuscript omits mention of the feet, giving the sense "The man who has already had a bath does not need to wash"; but it is difficult to see how this fits the context, whatever be our spiritual interpretation of it. Nor does it suit the circumstances; Peter has had his feet washed, and demands further cleansing; the reply should have been "He who has washed does not need to bathe", the very opposite of our text.

In verse 19, the text reads simply "You may believe that I am"; but it seems necessary here to supply a predicate (cf. notes on 8.51-59 above), and the only predicate which can reasonably be supplied is "that I am the Betrayed One in whose person David speaks". The fact that a prophecy was verified would not be sufficient ground, obviously, for inferring our Lord's Divinity. Verse 20 is preserved by the Synoptic Gospels in another context (see Matthew 10.40); it is difficult to see its relevance here.

13.21-38. *Judas' treachery and Peter's denial foretold.* See notes on Matthew 26.17-35, Mark 14.22-31, Luke 22.21-38. The scene can perhaps be reconstructed as follows. Our Lord announces that one of his disciples will betray him. At first there is a stunned silence (verse 22); then whispering (Luke 22.23). Then Peter beckons, and John asks privately who is the traitor. Our Lord answers him as in verse 26; meanwhile, the other Apostles begin to ask, "Is it I?" (Matthew 26.22,

Mark 14.19). Our Lord gives the sop to Judas, who starts up, asking, like the others, "Is it I, Master?" (Matthew 26.25). The reply is "Be quick on thy errand" (verse 27); it is this enigmatic utterance which Matthew has reproduced in the well-known formula of ambiguous assent, "Thy own lips have said it".

John is reclining on our Lord's right, in the most confidential position; but the left was the place of honour—who occupied it? St. Peter is the natural guess; but the beckoning to St. John does not fit in well with this arrangement, and some have thought that Judas was on our Lord's left. Perhaps, out of bravado, he had taken it (Luke 14.8, 22.24). According to one manuscript reading, St. Peter does not whisper to St. John, he "nods to him to ask who it could be"; cf. Acts 24.10. Our Lord's phrase in verse 27 can hardly indicate a genuine impatience on his part; the savour of it is plainly ironical, "You'd better hurry up, hadn't you?"—it is not a command.

Verse 33 must evidently be interpreted in the same sense as 7.34 and 8.21; our Lord is speaking of his return to heaven, not of his death.

14.1-14. *Our Lord himself is the Way to the Father.* Except for the last two verses of this chapter, and the last two verses of chapter 16, there is no reference at all, in chapters 14-17 inclusive, to our Lord's Passion. The note of farewell runs all through them, but always it is the Ascension, not the Crucifixion, that makes the farewell necessary. In the liturgy, accordingly, these chapters provide the Gospels for the Sundays after Easter, and it has been suggested that they do in fact record part of our Lord's teaching during the Forty Days (cf. Acts 1.3). Antecedently, it seems probable that part (at least) of this lengthy discourse should be ascribed to a different context. If it was night when Judas went out (13.30), and midnight when Peter was guilty of his first denial (Mark 14.68), allowance has to be made for the walk to Gethsemani, the Agony, the arrest, the return to Jerusalem, and the interrogation in the High Priest's house, between those two points of time—you do not get the impression that there was leisure for much talk besides.

A further question arises, whether the text of these chapters has been preserved for us in its right order. It is certainly strange that our Lord

should be represented as saying "Rise up, we must be going on our way" in 14.31, and not suiting the action to the word until we reach 18.1. A further difficulty has been felt about 16.5, which seems, by implication at least, to contradict 13.36 and 14.5. Accordingly, some commentators would insert the whole of chapters 15 and 16 towards the end of 13. But it is difficult to feel certain, even when this re-arrangement has been made, that we are reading the whole of a continuous conversation. The tone is uniform throughout, but the transitions of thought elude us.

In verse 1, it is possible to translate "have faith in God" as an imperative, but the order of the words in the Greek shews that this was not the author's intention. We may take it as a statement or as a question, but the difference is unimportant. In verse 2, neither the rendering "I would have told you, since . . ." nor the rendering, "I would have told you that" makes adequate sense. When, and upon what occasion, are we to suppose that it would have been incumbent on our Lord to give his Apostles the information referred to? In the absence of any particulars on this head, the whole sentiment becomes unnecessary. And what possible logic resides in the word "because", in the sentence "If there were only a few dwelling-places, I would have told you, *because* I am going away to prepare a home for you"? There can be little doubt that the sentence ought to be read as a question; "In my Father's house there are dwelling-places for others besides myself; if not, would I have told you that I was going away to prepare a home for you?" The reference may be to some utterance of our Lord's which the Evangelist has not recorded (cf. 6.36, 10.25, and perhaps 11.40); or it may be a vague reference to 12.26 above. For the use of "many" in the sense of "more than one" cf. Luke 1.1 and note.

In verse 5, Thomas probably thinks of the "way" as a mere direction; our Lord claims in verse 6 to be something more than that; he is not only the Truth which leads us to God, but the Life which brings us to God. Why "the Life"? Perhaps because the Hebrew maxim was that a man could not see God *and live*; a new source of vitality is needed if they are to breathe the air of those heights at which God is seen. And they, already, have caught sight of God; in seeing our Lord they have seen his Father, since both are One. With the second half



of verse 10, it is difficult to feel certain that the same conversation is being continued. We are carried back to 12.49; and this is followed in verse 11 by an appeal to the evidence of our Lord's acts—it is as if we were back among the crowds in the Temple, instead of being closeted in the Cenacle. Then, suddenly, in verses 13 and 14, we are carried forward to 16.24. If verses 10–14 represent a continuous conversation, they are surely only fragments of it.

In verses 12 and 13, the sequence of ideas has to be brought out a little; the text runs “. . . he will be able to do greater things yet, because I am going to the Father. Whatever request you make in my name, I will grant, so that through the Son the Father may be glorified”. So punctuated, the sentence is barely intelligible; the fact that our Lord is going back to his Father is not *in itself* the cause of ecclesiastical miracles. It is necessary to make the sentence run on; “because-I-am-going-to-the-Father-and-will-see-to-it-that-your-prayers-are-granted” must be the sense. The Greek has simply “whatever request you make”; the words “of the Father” are an interpretation on the part of the Latin translator. The thought would be simple enough, if our Lord were content to say “If you make any request of the Father in my name, he will grant it” (cf. 15.16 below). But he does not say that; in verse 14, according to the best manuscript tradition, we have to read “if you make any request of me in my own name”, though some authorities omit “of me”. In what sense does one make a request of somebody *in his own name*? Surely it is usual to appeal to A in the name of B?

It is difficult to see how we are to interpret our Lord except in terms of strict Incarnational theology. “If you make any request of me as God in the name of me as Man, if you make any request of the God-head in the name of the sacred Humanity, I will grant it; so that the Father, who is one with me as God, may be glorified through me Incarnate as Man”. No wonder the Latin translators inserted “of the Father” in verse 13, or that some copyists omitted “of me” in verse 14, to make the lesson more simple.

14.15–25. *The promise of the Holy Spirit.* This section is quite independent of the last. The promise of the Paraclete should perhaps be read against the background of Acts 1.6–8; St. Jude's question in

verse 22 suggests that the Apostles are still expecting an immediate, visible return of Christ in judgement. He promises that he *is* coming to them (verse 18). But not in Person, the context implies; he is giving them another Person, "called in" instead; namely, the Spirit of Truth. The idea that a "Paraclete" is a Consoler seems to have been an early guess based on a grammatical error. A "Paraclete" is somebody who is called in, commonly as a witness, an adviser, or an advocate. Most commonly, he is a legal patron who is called in to represent some person (or body of persons) unable to conduct their own case through want of forensic skill or of legal status. Now, in I John 2.1, which seems to be a reminiscence of the present passage, we are told that if anybody sins, he has an advocate or representative in the Father's presence, namely Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, then, is our Paraclete, our Advocate, and when he left the world he promised he would send another Advocate to replace him. Again, in Matthew 10.20 the Apostles are not to be concerned about defending themselves at law, because "the Spirit of their Father" will speak in them; on earth, then, as in heaven, the Holy Spirit is in a sense our Advocate.

On the other hand, it must be observed (i) that there is nothing in this Gospel which suggests that the Holy Spirit will be our legal Patron; he is to be the Teacher of the Apostles (verse 25 below), a Witness to our Lord's character (15.26), an Informer against the world's faithlessness (16.8), and an Interpreter of Divine truth (16.15). (ii) Christ is our Advocate, not on earth, but in heaven; why, then, does he leave us an Advocate on earth? And why do we need another Advocate, since he himself is our Advocate in heaven? It seems doubtful whether the idea of advocacy ought to colour our ideas of the metaphor too strongly. The essential point of a "Paraclete" is that he is a representative, somebody called in to supply a legal deficiency. Our Lord says he will not leave his Apostles "orphans"—that is the literal sense of verse 18. He, their Father, is being taken away from them, but he will leave them a Guardian in his place, to be his substitute and their representative, called in from outside. *Veni Pater pauperum*—not in the restricted sense of one who pleads at law, but under the more gracious image of one who takes the fatherless into his protection, the office of the Holy Spirit is first made known to us. He is to be our Patron, instead of

Christ; that is why the Father sends him "in my name" (verse 25). "The Befriender" was a description, not a title, until the Liturgy made it so.

Verses 19-24 do not really change the subject; they are concerned with that indwelling of the Blessed Trinity which the Holy Spirit comes to effect in us; and if he himself drops out of sight, that is because we are unconscious of his action when he is praying in us (Rom. 8.26).

14.27-31. *The first valediction.* The word "Peace" on Hebrew lips was a conventional salutation; "Health" or even "Prosperity" would be interchangeable as a rendering of it. But, at the best, the man who wishes you "Peace" is only hoping that you may get it; when our Lord gives us the Pax he does so in a different fashion from the world; interior peace is a possession of his own, and he is in a position to hand it on to us. "I am going away and coming back to you" in verse 28 (in view of the Hebrew use of "and") could almost be translated "I am only going away so as to come back to you"; the Ascension and Pentecost are correlatives. "If you really loved me" is the voice of the Lover, not really expressing a doubt, but eliciting a declaration of love. The sentiment, "you ought to be glad that I am going away, because my Father is greater than I", is, as it stands, a palpable *non sequitur*. To unravel the meaning, we have to look forward to 17.5, where the glorification of the Sacred Humanity is clearly expressed; the disciples ought to be glad of our Lord's departure, because he is to receive a reward from the hands of Omnipotence. In the present context, therefore, we must not expect to learn anything about the relations of the Divine Word to his Eternal Father; it is the Friend whom they are to lose that is inferior, as Incarnate, to the God he goes to.

With verse 29, we come back, almost with a shock, to the Cenacle. We are taking up the story again as from 13.38—to which, it must be confessed, verse 29 makes an admirable sequel. We shall rejoin the story once more in 16.32, and the phrase in verse 30 "I have no longer much time for converse with you" hardly prepares us for the interpolation of three chapters before a move is made to Gethsemani. John's arrangement of his material will always remain obscure to us;

dramatically, the return to earth here is unquestionably powerful. "He has no hold over me" in verse 30 is literally "he has nothing in me"; the thought is evidently that there is no *point d'appui* of sin in our Lord which would give the devil the right to make trial of him, as he did of Job (Job 1.12); if he is to undergo the passion, it is so that he may exhibit a perfect obedience.

15.1-11. *Union with Christ is Life.* It is tempting to suppose a formal contrast here with the "vine" of Israel that produced wild grapes (Is. 5.3) and the Vine worthy of the name, which is Christ in his Church. But, here as always, our Lord claims to be the "genuine" Vine as opposed to those shadows and images of heavenly things which we call "vines" on earth—the supernatural is the native haunt of his mind, and earthly things, to him, are somehow unreal. We might have expected him to say, "I am the trunk, my Church is the vine, you are the branches"; to St. Paul, our Lord is the Head, and we are members, of the mystical Body. But, although this would have made the allegory more symmetrical, it would have been less gracious than the image which insists on identifying, somehow, the faithful with their Master. In verse 2, ought we to follow the grammar, by translating "every branch that does not, in me, bear fruit", or the probable sense by translating "every branch in me that does not bear fruit"? Perhaps both instincts are right; what is condemned is the Christ-branch that does not bear Christ-fruit. We naturally understand the "trimming" as a reference to the discipline of suffering, but this idea does not seem to be uppermost in our Lord's mind, since he tells us in verse 3 that the Apostles have been "trimmed clean" through *his word*, through their general receptivity to his influence. "Through" has the sense of "thanks to"; the word is the principle, not the mere instrument, of their cleansing. The reference to the granting of requests in verse 7 seems faintly to interrupt the sequence of thought, as in verse 16 below. It seems to be a special preoccupation with our Lord, all through these last discourses, to let his disciples see that their communion with him will be uninterrupted after, and apparently in spite of, the Ascension. They will be able, now as ever, to go to him with their requests. In the same way, the "joy" spoken of in verse 11 is not our Lord's joy on earth



(Luke 10.21), but his joy in heaven (Matthew 25.21). He is not retiring into selfish isolation, leaving them in the lurch. The joys which are his by experience will, by faith, be theirs too.

15.12-17. *The testament of friendship.* There is no close logical connexion between this section and the verses which precede it. Our Lord is telling his disciples that men whom he has loved ought to love one another, just as he told them in 13.14 that men whom he has served ought to serve one another. Verse 13 contains an odd puzzle; why "for his friends"? If a man should die for men who have no claim on him at all, surely the love exhibited would be even more remarkable—and indeed, in Rom. 5.8, that is precisely what Paul claims; Christ died for us while we were still sinners. There is, of course, a slight ellipsis in the form of the argument here. What our Lord is saying is simply that sacrifice is the test of friendship, and the friend who is loved to the death is loved indeed; let the Apostles judge for themselves whether they are well loved or no. To ask whether he died for them because they were his friends, or whether they were his friends because he died for them, is to involve ourselves in the mysteries of Predestination—just so, the Good Shepherd gives up his life for his sheep (10.15) who have become his because he has purchased them with his Precious Blood (Acts 20.28). We must not press verse 14 so as to make it mean "And you can become my friends, if you are at pains to fulfil my commandments". The condition is only parenthetical: "So you see, you are my friends—though of course my friendship can be forfeited by disobedience".

Only John (18.8) has preserved our Lord's request "If I am the man you are looking for, let these others go free". Our Lord did, in a merely human sense, die that others might live. But we are free to suppose that, in making this gesture, he was hinting at a theological truth.

There is not even a verbal contradiction between verse 15 and 13.13 above. Our Lord *is* their Master, but he does not *call* them his servants, he calls them his friends. He does not come as a mere Task-master, telling his disciples what to do; he comes as an Ambassador, opening up to them the mind of his heavenly Father.

15.18-16.4. *The world's hatred.* The reference in verse 20 might be to 13.16 above, but in that passage the bearing of the maxim is quite different. Here, the sense is evidently "The servant must not expect better treatment than his master", which suggests an echo of Matthew 10.24. The rhetoric at the end of this verse is very difficult. "If they have been true to my word, they will be true to yours"; there is no sign that we are being introduced to two separate classes of people, the persecutors and the hearers of the word; the same subject must surely be understood in both clauses. Nor can we suppose that the attitude of the Jews towards the teaching of Christ is regarded as an open question; quite clearly they have not even accepted his teaching, let alone "kept true" to it. Some commentators have proposed to give the verb a hostile sense, "if they have treasured up my words against me" (cf. Matthew 22.15); but the usage of the Fourth Gospel is wholly against this. It only remains to treat the word "if" as entirely colourless; "in the measure in which they persecuted me they will persecute you, in the measure in which they kept true to my word they will keep true to yours". But the whole phraseology of the verse is awkward.

Verse 25 is probably a note by the author, not part of what our Lord said. In arguing with the Jews, he refers to the Law (that is, to Old Testament Scripture) as "your law" (8.17, 10.34), but this may be only by way of making it clear that he is using an *argumentum ad hominem*. Conceivably there is the same implication here; the Jews ought to have *known*—after all, there was that quotation in the Psalms which was quite familiar to them, about undeserved hatred . . . But the verse reads more naturally as a quotation which seemed apposite to the author at this point.

Those commentators who print chapter 14 after chapter 16 find it difficult to explain the suddenness with which the mention of "the Paraclete" is introduced here; by their account of it, our Lord has not yet referred to the mission of the Holy Spirit in his discourse. Verses 26 and 27 go more closely, in any case, with what follows than with what precedes; for the general thought, cf. Matthew 10.19-20. The incredulity of the Jews is inexcusable, and will continue to be so even after the Ascension, because the Holy Spirit will be challenging it with

his miraculous interference—and the Apostles, too, they must maintain their challenge. The verb in verse 27 might be indicative, but the order of the words suggests that it is better read as an imperative.

16.4-15. *The Holy Spirit's office.* The first half of verse 4 belongs to what has gone before, the second to what follows. Verse 5 presents an obvious difficulty; the disciples *have* been asking our Lord where he is going (13.36 and, by implication, 14.5). This is a strong argument for those commentators who diagnose a dislocation of the text. If we preserve the text in its present order, and credit it with complete historical continuity, we have to understand our Lord as meaning "You are no longer asking me where I am going; the mere fact that you are losing me makes you disconsolate". But it must be admitted that the difficulty finds an easier solution if we suppose that the utterances of chapters 14-16 were not all made at the same time. If 13.36 and 14.5 belong to the eve of the Passion, whereas 16.5 belongs to the eve of the Ascension, the discrepancy disappears. It is, incidentally, rather difficult to see any point in our Lord's saying "None of you is asking me where I am going", unless he was referring to a previous occasion on which, by contrast, they *had* asked the question.

Verses 8-11 are among the most difficult in the New Testament. The office of the Holy Spirit is here mysteriously described as one connected not with the Apostles, nor with the Church as represented by the Apostles, but with the world—that is, with that part of mankind, that element in human nature, which is and remains hostile to the Christian message. The purpose for which the Holy Spirit is sent is not to *convince* the world, i.e. persuade it of its error, but to *convict* the world, i.e. shew it up in its true colours. At first sight, we naturally suppose that verses 9-11 represent a threefold bill of attainder; in verse 9, the world is convicted of sin in not believing on Christ, in verse 11 it is convicted of false judgement, a false choice, in declaring for the Prince of Darkness who is now an outlawed rebel. But the utmost ingenuity of commentators has not been able to devise a formula which will make verse 10 fit into this pattern. It seems necessary, therefore, to understand the word "because" as indicating, not the several charges which the Holy Spirit will bring, but the several reasons which make

his presence necessary, now that the Christ no longer remains on earth. The pronoun "he" is expressed in verse 8 because it is emphatic. Our Lord has not convinced the world of its sinfulness; therefore *he*, the Holy Spirit, must come to convict it of sinfulness. Our Lord has gone up to heaven, and the living pattern of a life wholly pleasing to God is now withdrawn; therefore *he*, the Holy Spirit, must come to convict the (Jewish) world of wrong notions about how to please God (by a purely formal obedience to the Law of Moses). Sentence has in fact been pronounced against the Prince of Evil (but the effect of it has not yet been made manifest); therefore *he*, the Holy Spirit, must come to maintain the protest against the domination of evil in worldly hearts. It will be seen that verse 11 still does not quite match the two verses which precede it; a slight ellipsis of thought has to be allowed for. But this seems the safest way of understanding an extremely difficult passage.

Verses 12-15 evidently imply the doctrine of the Dual Procession, but their more immediate bearing is on the subject of revelation. Revelation in the strict sense continued all through the life-time of the Apostles; are we then to conclude that it was incomplete at the time of the Ascension? Not really, our Lord says; whatever the Holy Spirit reveals (for the verb, cf. 4.25 above) will be part of his, Christ's revelation, since all that comes from the Father comes equally from him.

16.16-23. *The distress of parting will not be felt for long.* The phrasing of verse 16 is as enigmatic to us as it was to the Apostles. Does "a little while and you shall no longer see me" imply a short interval of companionship followed by a parting, or a short interval of parting? The "and" can have either sense. But the tense of the verb is present, "a little while and you are seeing me no longer"; which suggests that the sense is "You are seeing me at present, but that present is rapidly coming to an end". On this interpretation, the sense will be "At present we are enjoying a brief companionship, which will be followed by a brief parting, because I am going to the Father". There is no specific reference to the Passion; the "parting" is the Ascension, and it will be "brief" probably because Pentecost puts an end to it (cf. 14.18 above),



although "I will see you again" in verse 22 may imply a longer perspective. Alternatively, we can interpret thus: "There will be a short period (Good Friday to Easter Sunday) during which you will not see me; and then another short period of companionship—short, because I must soon go back to my Father".

Verse 23 can accordingly be applied either to the time after our Lord's Resurrection, or to the time after his Ascension. It contains a further ambiguity, in that "ask anything of me" may mean "ask any questions of me" or "ask any favours of me". Probably it means "ask any questions" and refers back to verse 19. The disciples evidently did continue to ask our Lord questions after he had risen from the dead (cf. Acts 1.6). But when he had ascended into heaven, the Holy Spirit would come and guide them into all truth; there would be no need to ask any supplementary questions then. It might seem unnecessary for our Lord to say that the disciples would not ask *him* any questions after the Ascension; he would not be there. But no doubt his meaning is "You will not, then, be in the position you are in now, always having to come to *me* with questions; the Holy Spirit will resolve your difficulties for you".

16.23-33. *Further fragments of our Lord's parting discourse.* Verse 23 does not hang together as a piece of continuous dialogue, even if we translate "ask any favours of me"; our Lord has suddenly come back to the present, only returning to the future explicitly in verse 26. And indeed, all through these eleven verses, it is hard to trace any real thread of continuity; there are such gaps in the thought that it seems best to treat the passage as a series of isolated utterances.

In verse 23, the true manuscript reading is probably "You have only to make any request of the Father, and he will grant it in my name". The general idea is the same as in 14.25; but in that passage there was a hint of "as my substitute", whereas here the metaphor, stated crudely, is that of a benefactor who allows others to make use of his banking account. The Apostles (verse 24) had not been taught to use our Lord's name in intercession while he was with them; now that he is being taken away, they will have the double joy of finding their requests

granted, and feeling that it is an honour to have their requests granted under the title of his friendship.

If we are to trace any continuous sequence of thought in the verses which follow, we must suppose that our Lord regards his own language in verse 23 as unduly metaphorical in its manner of statement; "asking" the Father to do something for the disciples and put it down to his own "account" is, after all, only metaphor. The time has now come, he says (verse 25), to have done with metaphor, as far as that is possible in speaking of heavenly things; the real point is that God loves the men Christ loves; that is why he does what they ask. But we cannot be certain that the connexion of thought is so close as this. Verse 28 may belong to this, but might equally well belong to any other context. The difficulty is to see how verse 29 follows on it—surely the fact that our Lord came from his Father and is going back to his Father has been made sufficiently clear already (unless, indeed, chapters 14 and 15 are displaced). Perhaps verse 29 really follows on verse 27. But even so, what are we to make of verse 30? It evidently implies that our Lord has answered an unspoken question in the Apostles' minds, and that his power to read their minds so accurately has convinced them of his Divinity. Some commentators refer us back to verse 19; but did it really need any superhuman intelligence on our Lord's part to discover that the cryptic saying of verse 16 had left them bewildered? Much more probably there is a gap in the conversation before verse 30, which leaves us without a clue to its context; it is put in merely as an introduction to verse 31 (just as 13.36 and 37 are an introduction to 13.38).

"When you are to be scattered" in verse 32 is purposive, because it implies the necessary fulfilment of a prophecy, namely Zach. 13.7. The prophecy is quoted by Matthew (26.31) and Mark (14.27), but they may have been filling out what was a mere allusion in our Lord's statement. "Scattered each of you to his own" implies (as the event shewed) "his own devices" rather than "his own home". In verse 33, "this" probably means chapters 14-16, rather than 16.32.

17.1-26. *Our Lord's prayer for his Church.* In verse 2, "to bring eternal life to all those thou hast entrusted to him" is literally "in order that,

all the thing thou hast entrusted to him, he may bring them eternal life". The souls destined to life are treated as a single corpus of humanity, perhaps by way of foreshadowing the prayer which is expressed in verse 21 (cf. note on verse 24 below). This is of importance for the interpretation of verse 11. The best manuscripts have a reading there which ought to mean, "Holy Father, keep them in that one of thy names which thou hast given me", which would be contrary to all Hebrew instinct about the uniqueness of the Divine Name. Perhaps John wrote, though only a few of the older manuscripts have preserved, the phrase "Holy Father, keep them in thy name, that which thou hast given me". Most of the older copyists altered it to the formula given above, in a mistaken attempt to be idiomatic. They assumed, from the order of the words, that the relative clause referred to the word "name". In fact, it referred to the word "them", *exactly as in verse 2*, and this led other copyists to give "keep in thy name those whom thou hast given me" (the text followed by our Latin version). A similar confusion has arisen in verse 12.

The rendering "keep them in thy name, which thou hast given me", even if it can be justified in the Greek, involves an idea which occurs nowhere else in the New Testament. Our Lord did, indeed, use the Divine formula in 8.58; but everywhere he distinguishes between his own name and his Father's, insisting that he has come in his Father's name, not in his own (5.43)—was it, after all, the same thing? But, if we agree on the rendering "keep them, keep this thing thou hast given me, in thy own name" our difficulties are not at an end. Elsewhere, "in the name of" somebody means instead of, on behalf of, or for the sake of somebody—these ideas seem quite foreign to the context here. It is perhaps best to take the verb in its usual acceptation, not of guarding in general but of keeping a person in a particular place or state, "keep them in (the knowledge of) thy name"; cf. "I have given them (the knowledge of) thy name" in verse 6 above, and "thou keepest (the knowledge of) my name" in Apoc. 2.13. It was this common confession that was to unite our Lord's followers as "one thing".

In verse 9, "the world" is excluded probably in the most general sense; our Lord is only praying for his immediate followers there present. In verse 20 he extends the scope of his prayer so as to include

all Christian people, and in verses 21 and 23 so as to include all mankind. In verse 24, the literal sense of the Greek is, "Father, that thing which thou hast given me, my desire is that they may be with me where I am" exactly as in verse 2 and probably, as we have seen, in verses 11 and 12.

18.1-11. *The Betrayal*. See notes on Matthew 26.36-56, Mark 14.32-53, Luke 22.39-53. That John is the first Evangelist to mention Roman soldiers among the party which went out to arrest our Lord, is a circumstance which need occasion no surprise. It was no doubt undesirable, in the fateful years which preceded the fall of Jerusalem, to tell the story in a way which might associate Christians with the idea of armed resistance to Roman authority. Matthew 27.65 seems to suggest that the Temple authorities had—perhaps for the emergencies of the Pasch—a detachment of troops at their disposal. In any case, the governor may have sent troops out of mere prudence, to make sure that this midnight expedition did not prove a menace to the public peace. They may have stood by, for all we know, at a distance, leaving the Temple servants to effect the arrest.

At the same time, it is clear that John tells the story from the wrong end, from the point of view of the Temple officials. Perhaps that other disciple, mentioned in verse 15, had made his reminiscences public property by the time when John wrote. We hear nothing, in the Fourth Gospel, about the Agony, or the sleep of the Apostles, or the traitor's kiss; instead, we are given a piece of dialogue between our Lord and his persecutors which has hitherto passed unnoticed. He "went out" (verse 4) to meet them, from the shade of the trees into the torch-light—too quickly for his three companions to follow and to see what happened. The words "I am (Jesus of Nazareth)" may perhaps, to some of those present, have been an echo of 8.58. The echo of 17.12 in verse 9 is much more curious; John takes a poignant utterance which refers to eternal loss and applies it to a situation of merely temporal danger. But this may be only in appearance; it is probable that Judas was to have been called as a witness for the prosecution, and after his ill-timed suicide, it would have been convenient to have one of the Apostles under arrest. If Peter, if John himself, had been made



to appear as a witness, he might have been tempted to buy his personal safety at the price of incriminating his Master. Or the explanation may be at once simpler and deeper. Perhaps John saw in the words "let these others go free" a symbol of the atoning Death; cf. 15.13 and note. It is curious that John does not allude to the miracle performed on Malchus (Luke 22.51), but he is always an unpredictable *raconteur*.

18.12-27. *Christ before the Council; St. Peter's denial.* See notes on Matthew 26.57-75, Mark 14.54-72, Luke 22.54-71. It is not clear why our Lord was taken to the house of Annas in the first instance. What is quite clear is that the "high priest" mentioned in verse 19 is Caiphas, not Annas; even John could not have been confusing on this point, after his reiterated statement (11.49,51, 18.13) that Caiphas was high priest. The conversation, then, recorded in verses 19-23 is an extract from the same conversation which is recorded in Matthew 26.59-68 and parallels; and since there is no apparent reason why Caiphas should have conducted the interrogation in somebody else's house, it is a natural inference that verse 24 ought to have been put in after verse 14. That it was not, is due to John's invariable habit of delaying his foot-notes (1.24,40,44, 3.24, 4.8, 5.10, 6.60, 9.8,14, 11.2,30). That the interrogation, and St. Peter's denial, took place in Caiphas' house is clearly stated by Matthew (26.57).

The use of the words "another disciple" in verse 15 has given rise, from the earliest times, to the unwarranted and improbable notion that John is referring to himself. John's habit of back-reference is a characteristic feature of his Gospel; even in verse 16 he must remind us that this unnamed disciple was the high priest's acquaintance. And after his first mention, in 13.23, of a certain disciple whom Jesus loved, he repeats that description in 19.26, 20.2, 21.7 and 21.20 (where an extra identification is given). Only in 20.8 is the formula omitted, and there he is distinguished as "the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first". It is unthinkable that if John were referring to himself in the present passage, he should introduce himself as a stranger not previously mentioned. Nicodemus, or Joseph of Arimathea, might be alluded to, but it is more probable that this other disciple has found no niche in Gospel history.

Verses 19-24 are plainly a mere fragment of reminiscence; John has omitted to tell us what happened at the trial, perhaps because he regarded it as common knowledge. For St. Peter's denial, see notes on Matthew 26.57-75.

18.28-19.16. *The trial before Pilate.* See notes on Matthew 27.11-26, Mark 15.1-32, Luke 23.1-25. Verse 28 gives us an invaluable side-reference which disposes of any idea (see notes on Matthew 26.17-25, Luke 22.1-20) that in the year when our Lord suffered the Pasch was eaten on a Thursday. The chief priests will not enter the Praetorium on Friday morning because it would make them unclean, and they could not eat the Pasch. Verse 30 introduces a real difficulty. Is it likely that any body of men would hand over a prisoner without giving any indication of his offence? And indeed in Luke 23.2 we find a most circumstantial indictment (apparently unrecorded by the Synoptist tradition) which was brought against our Lord at this precise moment. Presumably John means us to understand that the Jews had already formulated their charges in a general way, perhaps when they asked for the military assistance of verse 3; Pilate's routine demand for a formal indictment, in verse 29, takes them by surprise. Evidently the nerve of the accusation was "he calls himself Christ the King"; all four Gospels are agreed that "Art thou the king of the Jews?" was the first question Pilate asked. Our Lord's reply, as given by the Synoptists, was (formally at least) an ambiguous one, "Thy own lips have said it". The implication was "Well, people seem to have got hold of that idea, don't they?" This does not differ much from what our Lord says in verse 34; the dialogue which follows, in private it would seem, has been missed out by the Synoptists, who go on to the public interrogation implied in 19.9.

Meanwhile, in 19.1, John records the Scourging in what is, no doubt, its historical context. Matthew and Mark (27.26 and 15.15) introduce it in parenthesis, as if it were an added piece of brutality; Luke (23.16) omits the fact, but attributes to Pilate what is obviously intended to be a humane suggestion. Reading John in the light of Luke, it is easy to see that Pilate had our Lord scourged in the hope that this would mean sparing his life. The *Ecce homo* of verse 5 (not mentioned in the other

Gospels) is inaccurately rendered by the words "Behold the man!", nor does this rendering convey the mixture of pity and contempt with which Pilate said "Here the poor fellow is". The leaking out of the true charge in verse 7, and Pilate's half-superstitious reaction to it, have a dramatic value which can hardly have been due to the inventive skill of an Evangelist.

When our Lord uses the words attributed to him in verse 11, it is perhaps natural to assume that the idea of man's responsibility to God was in his thoughts. But the direct implication of the statement is that Pilate is acting as the representative of Caesar. Otherwise, there is a fatal gap in the logic of the passage. The fact that Pilate received his magisterial position, ultimately, from Almighty God might perhaps increase, but could not extenuate, his guilt. The point is surely that Pilate stands to some extent excused because he represents the Imperial interest, and cannot afford to dismiss lightly a charge which suggests disloyalty to the emperor.

The details given us about Pilate's movements (18.33, 38, 19.4, 9, 13) succeed in conveying the impression that our Lord's trial was a leisurely affair. But it would be surprising to find, in any case, that it lasted from dawn till noon, as 19.14 indicates. Moreover, noon is the hour at which tradition has placed the actual moment of crucifixion, and Mark (15.25) seems to put it even earlier. Perhaps we are meant to understand that the preliminaries of execution had been gone through, and our Lord was actually on his way to Calvary, when Pilate said "*Ecce rex vester*". This would explain why John writes, in verse 16, as if our Lord was handed over by Pilate *to the Jews*; the soldiers, already in marching order, begin to thread their way through the crowd, with their prisoners in between them; the Jews close in, as if they too were executioners, not merely spectators. If this is John's meaning, his estimate of the time does not after all conflict so violently with Mark's. When two witnesses are reckoning by the sun, not by the clock, it is quite possible for one to describe the baking heat of the square as "nearly mid-day", while the other, remembering the comparative coolness of the narrow streets, can still think of it as morning rather than noon, and therefore fitting into that division of the day which begins with nine and ends with twelve. We may make a rough guess that our Lord's actual condemna-

tion took place some time between ten and eleven, his crucifixion some time between eleven and twelve.

19.17-27. *The Crucifixion.* See notes on Matthew 27.27-44, Mark 15.1-32, Luke 23.26-43. In his account of the Crucifixion, even more than in the rest of his Gospel, it is difficult to avoid the impression that John is leaving out certain details as too well known, in his day, to be worth repeating; the darkness, for instance, and the rending of the Temple veil. Nor does he tell us anything about anybody—even the chief priests—mocking the Crucified. He seems more concerned to supply explanations illustrating the facts we know already; the reason why lots were cast by the soldiers, the reason why they brought our Lord wine to drink on the Cross. It is probable that the words addressed to his Mother and to St. John were omitted by previous Evangelists for personal reasons if for no other; this would be understandable enough in the Blessed Virgin's life-time.

In verse 25, we seem to have an echo of the statement made by all three Synoptists (Matthew 27.55, Mark 15.40, Luke 23.49) that there were certain women who stood "far off" watching the Crucifixion. In Luke they are all anonymous; assuming that Salome was the name of Zebedee's wife, Matthew and Mark agree in naming three, Mary the mother of Joseph and of James the Little, Salome, and Mary Magdalen. From John's account, it is evident that the Blessed Virgin stood within earshot; the rest may have been at a greater distance. Does John mention three other women, Mary of Clopas and an unnamed sister of the Blessed Virgin (possibly Salome), and Mary Magdalen? Or does he leave his mother Salome unmentioned (Zebedee is mentioned in 21.2), and only refer to two women, both called Mary? If so, Mary of Clopas was also (presumably) the mother of James and Joseph, and was certainly the Blessed Virgin's "sister".

Was Salome both sister of the Blessed Virgin and the wife of Zebedee? It is very unlikely; that James and John should have been first cousins of our Lord, and that no indication of the fact should have been preserved to us either in Scripture or by tradition, seems hardly possible. On the other hand, the appearance of an unnamed member of the Holy Family, nowhere else alluded to, in this passage



is unaccountably sudden. There is nothing against the identification of "his mother's sister" with "Mary of Clopas", except the inherent probability of two sisters bearing the same name. But the two Marys may have been cousins, not sisters (cf. notes on Matthew 13:53-58), James and Joseph being thus second cousins of our Lord.

Since Matthew tells us, in the passage just cited, that our Lord had "brethren" called James, Joseph, Simon and Jude, it is natural to suppose that the two first named (though not necessarily all four) were the sons of a certain Mary, "sister" of the Blessed Virgin, and her husband Clopas. This finds support in tradition, since Hegesippus, a second-century author quoted by Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.22) has much to tell us about Symeon, a cousin of our Lord. "After James the Just had suffered martyrdom for the same reason as the Lord, Symeon the son of Clopas was appointed bishop, whom all proposed because he was another cousin of the Lord". Thus Hegesippus agrees with our conclusions to the extent that our Lord had two cousins, called James and Simon, one of them being (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.33) the son of Mary, wife of Clopas. But it must be admitted that he darkens counsel when he tells us (*Hist. Eccl.* 3.11) that Clopas was "the brother" of Joseph. Did Mary, cousin of the Blessed Virgin, marry Clopas, the brother of St. Joseph? Or is Mary, in the Gospels, called the "sister" of the Blessed Virgin in the loose sense that she was sister-in-law to St. Joseph? Or had the tradition, as it reached Hegesippus, become contaminated with guess-work, and was that guess-work wrong?

Few commentators would be prepared to go the whole way with Hegesippus. He describes Symeon as a cousin of our Lord, and James as another, but nowhere does he suggest that they were brothers, or call James the son of Clopas. Yet "Mary of Clopas" and "Mary the mother of James" seem to be interchangeable terms in the Gospels. Where information is so fragmentary, there must always be room for doubt. But perhaps we do most justice to the evidence by concluding as follows: That the Blessed Virgin had a sister, or more probably a cousin, of the same name, who was present at the Crucifixion. That she was married to Clopas, who may or may not have been related, in his turn, to St. Joseph. That they had four sons, second cousins to our Lord, James, Joseph, Jude, and Simon (or Symeon). That the first and

last of these four were successive bishops of Jerusalem. That James is probably identical with the Apostle called "James of Alphaeus" in Matthew 10.3 and parallels, "Clopas" being the Greek name adopted by his father Chalphai as the nearest available Gentile substitute.

If, as some critics have supposed, the Blessed Virgin had had sons, or even step-sons, of her own, the utterances recorded in verses 26 and 27 would hardly have been made.

19.28-42. *Our Lord's death and burial.* See notes on Matthew 27.45-66, Mark 15.33-47, Luke 23.44-56. The single word which told his executioners that our Lord was thirsty would be hardly more than a sigh which escaped him, inaudible except to those nearest at hand. Curiously, no Evangelist quotes Ps. 68.22 in connexion with the soldiers' "vinegar"; but it is possible we ought to understand, in verse 28, "Jesus said, *I am thirsty*, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled". He had lived a decreed life; that was the first and most obvious significance of his later word, "It is achieved". Most probably, this was the "loud cry" mentioned by all three Synoptists, the committal of his spirit (Luke 23.46) being only a murmur.

The question has been much debated, whether the flow of water from our Lord's side was a natural or a miraculous event. In any case, it is probably not any miraculous, but a mystical significance that John is so anxious to emphasize. He has just told us, in verse 30, that our Lord "handed over his spirit"; then, in verse 34, he tells us how blood and water came from the pierced side; then adds a solemn warrant about the truth of his statement. It can scarcely be an accident, when the same author writes (I John 5.8) "We have a threefold warrant on earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood". There you have, as so often in John, mysticism with sacramental overtones.

Matthew (27.54) represents the centurion and his men as being impressed by the earthquake; he does not necessarily imply that they were still standing at the foot of the cross. Mark (15.39) mentions only the centurion, who is standing "opposite" our Lord and "perceived that he so yielded up his spirit with a cry". Is this consistent with John's account? John seems to imply (verses 32 and 33) that the soldiers had gone to a distance, and came back to find our Lord, unexpectedly,

dead. The apparent discrepancy is due to a Hebrew trick of writing "when they saw" in contexts where an Englishman would say "realizing"—no new discovery is indicated (cf. Matthew 2.16, 27.24, Luke 8.47, etc.). The soldiers had seen our Lord die; when they came back, realizing that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. "Opened" his side in verse 34 seems due to a false reading; the Greek has simply "wounded".

John's story of the entombment differs from that of the Synoptists only in giving fresh details; e.g., the weight of the spices, the fact that the tomb was in a garden, and the presence of Nicodemus.

20.1-9. *The empty tomb.* See notes on Matthew 28.1-15, Mark 16.1-8, Luke 24.1-12. For readers of Mark, John seems to put our Lord's condemnation too late in the day (cf. notes on 18.28-19.16 above); equally, he seems to put the discovery of the Empty Tomb too early in the day (verse 1; cp. Mark 16.2). Probably John emphasizes the early start made by the women, Mark the full light which shone on the tomb when they reached it. We need not take refuge in the explanation that Mary Magdalen went on ahead of the others, though this would also account for John's silence about them. Probably his information came from her, and he concentrates attention on her without any particular design of doing so. That she started out for Jerusalem ahead of the others is probable enough; while the others stand about arguing what to do next, impulsiveness carries her back to the Cenacle. The journey only took her a few minutes; she returned at a more leisurely pace to the spot where she had left her companions. Meanwhile, Peter and John had run out to the tomb, and had looked inside it. We are told by Mark (16.5) and Luke (24.3), what Matthew no doubt implies, that the women had looked in the tomb for themselves, and found it tenantless. It need not have been more than a hasty glance; Peter and John examine the tomb carefully, and find that the graveclothes have been left behind, which makes it clear to them that the Magdalen's explanation in verse 2 was wrong; if the body had been removed, the graveclothes would have disappeared with it. John found faith—faith, that is, in the Resurrection—there and then; Peter's

attitude, if we accept Luke 24.12 as genuine, was more reserved until our Lord actually appeared to him.

Why did the Magdalen assume that the body had been stolen away, if she had received, as the Synoptists would lead us to imagine, an angelic assurance that her Master had risen? Probably she had run back to the city immediately after the preliminary glance recorded in Mark 16.5—that is to say, *before* the angels had appeared to the other women.

20.10-17. *The appearance to the Magdalen.* It is difficult to be certain whether this is the same appearance as that recorded by Matthew (28.9 and 10). Perhaps the most natural supposition is that she had not yet returned to the tomb when the rest of the holy women met our Lord as they ran back with the angels' message. But this would conflict with Mark 16.9, where we are told that our Lord appeared *first* to Mary Magdalen. Conceivably, then, the holy women were present, unmentioned as before, all through the events of John 20.10-17, of which Matthew 28.5-10 are only a rough summary. But it must be confessed that Mark's account (16.8) is less easily squared with John's. On the whole, the simplest account of what happened on Easter morning seems to be the following:

(i) Mary Magdalen, Salome, etc., come to the tomb, and see the stone rolled away. Mary Magdalen runs back at once to tell the Apostles.

(ii) Salome, etc., look into the tomb, and are addressed by an angel.

(iii) Salome, etc., meet our Lord as they return from the tomb.

(iv) Peter and John come to the tomb.

(v) Mary Magdalen comes back to the tomb, looks into it, is addressed by two angels, and meets our Lord immediately afterwards.

The two separate meetings, one with Mary Magdalen, one with Salome and the rest, were so alike in time, place and circumstance that they coalesced in early Christian memory, and could be described indifferently as an appearance to Mary Magdalen (Mark 16.9) or "to certain women of our company" (Luke 24.22). It is even possible that Luke "telescopes" the two incidents when he describes the women as



addressed by two angels (24.5) as Mary Magdalen was (John 20.12), rather than by one (Matthew and Mark).

John does not explain, either here or in 21.4, why there was any difficulty in recognizing the risen Christ. Evidently there is no question of hallucination—hallucination sees resemblances which do not exist, whereas the witnesses of the Resurrection failed, at first, to recognize a resemblance which did exist. We can only suppose that our Lord preferred to reveal himself thus gradually, an explanation which is suggested both in Luke 24.16 and in Mark 16.12. In verse 17 “Do not touch me” is a mistranslation; the order of the words in the Greek shews that the Magdalen was already touching him (cf. Matthew 28.9). She was clinging to him as if in fear of losing him again, and he tells her that there is no need to be afraid of that yet.

20.18–31. *The two appearances in the upper room.* See notes on Luke 24.36–53. It is difficult to be certain how far Luke and John cover the same ground here, because several phrases in the text of Luke may or may not be interpolations. But there can be little doubt that the same occasion is being described by both Evangelists; cf. also Mark 16.14. The curiously frigid phrase at the end of verse 20 is probably a tacit reference to 16.22 above. The words our Lord uses in verses 22 and 23 can hardly be read merely as a promise of something he intends to do in the future; it is safer to regard them (in so far as we have any understanding of such matters) as a grace-conveying ceremony which had its delayed action on the day of Pentecost. The story of St. Thomas is not alluded to elsewhere in the New Testament; it may have been thought ungenerous to recall it during his life-time. Verses 30 and 31 no doubt represent the point at which John meant his reminiscences to end; perhaps we owe the extra chapter to the importunacy of his disciples.

21.1–14. *The appearance by the lake-side.* There is no plausibility in the suggestion that we should identify the incident here related with that which Luke relates much earlier in the story (Luke 5.2). The only resemblance, apart from the actual matter of the story, is the night of unsuccessful fishing (Luke 5.5, John 21.3), but the coincidence is a

slight one, and the emphasis laid on the fact is readily understandable.

It is doubtful whether the failure of the Apostles to recognize our Lord in verse 4 would need, taken by itself, any explanation; distance or haze might account for it. But verses 7 and 12 are calculated to fortify the impression that once more (cf. 20.14 and note) there was a failure of the seeing organ; the risen Body did not yield its secret, all at once, to human eyes. Verse 7 is one of those remembered details which John loves to preserve, though it really adds nothing to the story. The same may be said about the number of fish caught; about the fire, the loaves and the fish—instinctively the reader tries to find mystical or sacramental significance in all these details, but only to find that they do not “add up”. The whole scene is a kind of pastoral, in which the common events of human life are somehow spiced with a foretaste of resurrection; that is all. It is conceivably the same occasion which is described at the end of Matthew (28.16-20); if so, the curious phrase used there, “though some were still doubtful”, may refer to the hesitations of verses 4, 7 and 12.

21.15-25. *St. Peter and the beloved disciple.* It has been plausibly conjectured, especially in view of verse 17, that our Lord's threefold challenge has reference to St. Peter's threefold denial. And some commentators have argued that this dialogue must have taken place when our Lord first met St. Peter after the Resurrection—on the occasion referred to in Luke 24.34, I Cor. 15.5. It is true that these verses, 15-25, do not follow necessarily on verses 1-14; the commission given to Peter as Shepherd is not topical, like the commission given to Peter as Fisherman in Luke 5.10. But if John had been in any doubt about his facts, he would clearly have inserted the present passage after 20.9. And perhaps those best qualified to deal with souls will be least surprised that our Lord's rebuke, if rebuke it was, should have been a delayed one.

In verses 15-17, the distinction between two Greek verbs has been marked by a distinction between “care for” and “love” in the rendering given. But it is very doubtful whether any distinction is intended, either in the Greek or in the Latin. Nor is it by any means certain which of the two verbs is the stronger or the more intimate. The

probability is that our Lord used the same word, and St. Peter answered him in the same word, three times over, but John (or his Greek amanuensis) introduced a second word in the Greek from a natural (though mistaken) desire to avoid monotony. It is conceivable, too, that our Lord used the same word three times over for "sheep". Over this, the manuscripts give a wide range of variants; probably the original text had three different words, (i) little lambs, (ii) little sheep, (iii) sheep. The classification thus becomes progressive, and it is even possible to suggest that the use of the word "tend" instead of "feed" in the second category only was intentional—the yearlings being more apt to stray than either the mothers or the new-born lambs.

"Stretch out thy hands" in verse 18 is understood by some of the Fathers as the attitude of crucifixion (cf. Rom. 10.21), but this plainly disturbs the sequence of ideas. Perhaps it is best to understand "thou shalt stretch out thy hands, and another shall gird thee" as referring to the attitude of an old man (weakened, too, by imprisonment) who has not the strength to gird up his clothes for the walk to execution, and is fain to let one of his gaolers do it for him. But the phrases used may have been recognized as conveying a double meaning, in view of the fact that St. Peter did die by crucifixion. "That he should wait till I come" in verse 22 might be understood, nowadays, of a natural as opposed to violent death; but the Church in the first age was so pre-occupied with expectations of the Second Coming that the prophecy was inevitably interpreted as referring to that event. Nor is it unlikely that our Lord himself meant to foretell the future in that sense; as in Matthew 16.28 (where see note) he identifies the Second Coming with the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70, probably on the lines indicated in the notes on Matthew 24.1-35. The destruction of Jerusalem was not in fact attended by a theophany, but if the Jewish people had not persisted in their unbelief, this would have been God's hour. Peter is to suffer martyrdom in the later sixties; it does not concern him to know whether John will live to see A.D. 70.

The Second Coming was still being expected, though perhaps with less urgency, as something close at hand, when John wrote his Gospel. Either he himself put in a foot-note (verse 23) to give the exact wording of an often misquoted saying, or his disciples put it in when they

edited the Gospel after his death. To them we owe, on the face of it, the additional foot-note given in verse 24; John himself, even if he had been prepared to attest his own veracity at this point (cf. 19.35), would hardly have used a plural verb. On the other hand, the singular verb used in verse 25 seems to indicate that John himself is once again our author. It is not a group of disconsolate survivors, it is the Evangelist himself who closes the record with the reflection that there was so much more to say—if only one had been able to put it down!





## INDEX

- Abiathar, priesthood of, 76
- Abomination of desolation, the, 56, 181-182
- Adoption, importance of in early times, 1, 131
- Agony, our Lord's, 65, 108-109, 189-190, 249
- Angels, teaching on, 39
- Annas and Caiphas, positions of, 129-130, 244-245, 266
- Anointing of our Lord in the Pharisee's house, 141-144; at Bethany, 61-62, 107, 244-246
- Anointing of the sick, 85
- Apostles, call of the, 6, 73-74, 134-135, 205; names of the, 16, 138-139; mission of the, 16-17, 84-85, 146
- Ascension, the, described, 117, 198-199; referred to, 206, 227; not referred to, 212-213; subject of discourse in the Cenacle, 252, 257, 260, 261-262
- Atonement, the, 45, 203-204, 258
- Baptism, first institution of, 5, 73; referred to metaphorically, 100-101, 161; referred to by implication, 201, 215, 251
- Beatitudes, the, 7, 139-140
- "Beget" used in wide sense, 1
- Bethsaida, geographical difficulty connected with, 87-88, 146-147, 224
- Betrayal, our Lord's, 65-66, 190, 265-266
- Birth, date of our Lord's, 124-126
- Brethren, our Lord's, 28, 78-79, 228, 269-271
- Burial, our Lord's, 70, 114
- Caiphas, priesthood of, 66, 129-130, 244, 266
- Celibacy, teaching on, 42
- Church, the, as arbiter of disputes, 40
- Crucifixion, our Lord's, 69, 110-112, 193-194, 269; time at which it took place, 268-269
- David, our Lord's descent from, 22, 32, 52, 123-124, 131
- "Day" of our Lord, 173, 236-237
- Detachment, teaching on, 10, 159
- Devils and diabolical possession, 13-14, 24, 74, 82, 207
- Divorce, teaching on, 8, 40-42, 99
- Earthquake, at the Crucifixion, 69, 113; at the Resurrection, 71
- Egypt, flight into, 3, 128
- Elias and the Second Coming, 18-20, 37-38, 93
- Eucharist, institution of the, 64, 108, 185-187; doctrine of the, directly taught, 226; referred to by implication, 224-226, 227
- "Except", use of the word, 8, 212

## INDEX

- Faith, teaching on, 48, 84, 94;  
insistence of St. John's gospel  
on, 208, 234, 272
- Fasting, teaching on, 15, 94-95
- Fig-tree, cursing of the, 48
- "Fire on the earth", 160-161
- "First-born", use of the word, 2,  
126
- Fishes miraculously caught,  
134-135, 274
- "Flesh", use of the word, 227
- Flight into Egypt, the, 3, 128
- Forgiveness of sins, early scruples  
about, 194, 231
- Galilee, appearances of the risen  
Christ in, 70-72, 188, 196, 275
- Genealogy, our Lord's, 1, 130-131
- Gentiles, call of the, foreshadowed,  
18, 27, 31, 43-44, 49, 103, 133,  
166-168, 170-171, 180
- "Gods", use of the word, 241
- Gospels known to St. Luke, 118
- Grace and free-will, teaching on,  
26, 144-145, 171-172, 178, 202
- Gratitude, teaching on, 172
- "Hell", use of the word, 171
- Herodians, the, 51, 77
- "Hour" of our Lord's Passion,  
207-208
- House used by our Lord at  
Capharnaum, 14-15, 75, 76, 78,  
136
- Humanity of our Lord, stress laid  
on the, 99, 108, 129, 193, 243, 249
- "I am", emphatic use of the  
phrase, 216, 233, 237, 251, 265
- Jerusalem, destruction of, con-  
nected in thought with the  
Second Coming, 56-57, 105, 173,  
276
- Jews, the, their culpability extenu-  
ated, 77, 104, 138, 194; identified  
in St. John's gospel with the  
Jewish rulers, 219, 229; conver-  
sion of the, as preliminary of  
the Second Coming, 55, 56, 93,  
162
- John the Baptist, his birth, 119,  
123; begins baptizing, 73; his  
recognition of our Lord as "the  
Lamb of God", 203-204; his  
self-effacement, 213-214; his  
disciples contrasted with our  
Lord's, 15; his impatience for  
the Messianic Coming, 18; com-  
pared with Elias, 37-38; his  
death, 29, 85; attitude of the  
Jews towards him, 49, 221
- John the Evangelist, character of  
his gospel, vi-ix; sacramental  
overtones in it, 201, 225, 251;  
suggestions of dislocation in the  
text of it, 209-210, 218-219, 253,  
259, 260; his delayed footnotes,  
203, 241; his habit of cross-refer-  
ence, 241, 266; not always clear  
whether he is quoting or com-  
menting, 213, 214, 259; the  
language he attributes to our  
Lord echoed in the Synoptists,  
21, 192
- Jonas, the sign of the prophet, 23,  
156
- Joseph, "the carpenter", 28; his  
hesitations about the Blessed

- Virgin, 2; his residence at Nazareth, 3-4, 120, 128; was he alive at the time of our Lord's ministry? 225
- Judas Iscariot, his treachery foretold, 51, 227; at the Last Supper, 63-64, 187, 251-252; his remorse, 67-68
- "Just", use of the word, 9, 49; perhaps applied to our Lord as a sort of code-word, 195
- Kingdom, the, of Heaven (or "of God"), to be identified as the Church on earth, 26-27, 51, 58; as the return of our Lord in judgement, 40; as the enjoyment of Heaven, 185; spoken of as existing within us, 172
- Knowledge, human and superhuman, attributed to our Lord, 48, 58, 76, 82-83, 105-106, 129, 138
- "Lamb of God", meaning of the phrase, 203-204
- Last Supper, the, in what sense a paschal meal, 62-63, 107, 183-185; order of events at the, 187-188, 251-252
- Love, cause or effect of forgiveness? 143-144; different Greek words for, 275-276
- "Lowliness", use of the word, 122-123
- Luke, refers to his predecessors in the same field, 118; date of his gospel, 181-183; agrees with Matthew about sayings, but not about the occasion of them, 131, 139; omits incidents for fear that he may have narrated them in a different form already, 134-135, 142, 176, 179, 180; his vagueness in describing numbers, etc., 136; his "greater omission", 147; his use of personal sources which seem to go back to our Lord himself, 149, 189-190; credited with the authorship of John 8.1-11, 231
- Magnificat, authorship of the, 122
- "Many", use of the word, 51, 118
- Mark, was he present at the Betrayal? 109; his confused grouping of sayings, 78, 80-81, 85, 96, 102; his *outré* use of language, 73, 74, 75, 92; the epilogue to his gospel, 116-117
- Martha, in what sense reproved, 154, 243
- Mary, the Blessed Virgin, Annunciation made to, 120-121; her perpetual virginity, 28, 120-121, 269-271; Simeon's prophecy about her, 127-128; at Cana, 207; used as type of our Lord's human kindred, 24, 156; beside the Cross, 269; her supposed place in Luke's genealogy, 130-131
- Mary Magdalen, is her penitence described by Luke? 142; is she to be identified with Mary of Bethany? 61, 153-154, 241-242, 245-247; her witness to the Resurrection, 272-274



# INDEX

- Mary the mother of James, 28, 269-271
- Matthew, his call, 14-15, 75-76; his use of the sources available to him, 47-48; date of his gospel, 36, 68 (see also *Synoptic Problem*)
- Ministry, our Lord's, when did it begin? 129, 205, 210
- Miracles, accompanied by quasi-sacramental acts, 89, 91, 238; accompanied by didactic formulas of speech, 134; in what sense they demand faith, 83, 84, 94, 136; possibility of their occurrence outside the Christian fellowship, 11, 96-97
- Moses, his career recalled by that of our Lord, 223
- Name of, in the (phrase how used), 17, 254, 262
- Nazareth, St. Joseph's residence at, 3-4, 120, 128; our Lord's rejection at, 27-28, 83-84, 132-133, 218
- Oaths, teaching on, 8, 54
- Old Testament, quotations from the, liberties taken with, 13, 15, 18-19, 73
- "Other disciple", perhaps to be identified as St. John, 205; not to be identified as St. John, 266
- Palm Sunday, 46-47, 101, 179, 247
- Parables, our Lord's use of, 25, 79-80, 139-140; similar or identical? 50-51, 59, 81, 177-178
- Paraclete, meaning of word, 255-256
- Pasch, the, and the Last Supper, 62-63, 107, 183-185
- Paternoster, the, 9-10, 155
- Peace, use of word in the Bible, 256
- Penitence, teaching on, 143-144, 167-168
- Peter, when and why called Simon Peter, 135; his wife, 13; he walks on the sea, 30; his confession, 34-35, 148; pays the tribute money, 38; his denial foretold, 108; as pillar of his brethren, 188-189; his denial, 67, 109-110, 192; he visits the Tomb, 272-273; his future foretold, 275-276; where mentioned in Mark, but not in Matthew, 102
- Pharisees, teaching of the, 31, 52-54, 88, 157-158, 175
- Pilate, trial before, 110, 192-193, 267-268; additional information about, 68-69
- Prayer, teaching on, 155, 174; our Lord's for his Church, 264-265
- Prophet, the, 202, 216
- Purgatory, teaching on, 7, 40, 160, 162
- Quirinius (Cyrinus) and the registration, 124-126
- Resurrection, the, prophesied, 23, 37, 96; described, 71, 114-117, 196-198, 272-274; order of events at the, 273

- Revenge, teaching on, 150-151
- Riches, teaching on, 43, 99-100, 169-171
- Roman soldiers in Gethsemani, 265
- Rome, Mark and Luke written at, 30, 34, 109, 110-111
- Sabbath, teaching on the, 21, 220
- Sacramental gestures used in our Lord's miracles, 89, 91, 238
- Sadducees, the, 33, 51, 91
- Salvation, difficulty of attaining, 11, 99, 163, 165-166
- Scandal, use of word, 18, 28, 84, 132
- Second Coming, the, apparently prophesied as imminent, 17, 36, 217, 276; connected with the return of Elias, 19-20; with the conversion of the Jews, 55, 93, 162; with the destruction of Jerusalem, 56-58, 105-106, 181-183, 276; readiness for, 159-160; apparently expected to follow on our Lord's Resurrection, 196-197
- Seventy disciples, the, 151-153
- Sign, of the prophet Jonas, 23, 156; of the Son of Man, 57
- Sin against the Holy Ghost, what, 22
- "Sinners" as a name for the Gentiles, 15, 196
- "Son of Man" as Messianic title, 14, 220, 249
- "Sparing the Apostles", 107, 176, 188, 191
- Spirit, in the sense of wind, or of breath? 211; of "powerlessness", 163; the Holy, promised, 254-256, 260-261
- Steward, the dishonest, meaning of, 168-169
- Sweat of blood, the, 189-190
- Sword, as symbol of spiritual martyrdom, 127-128; of separation, 161; as part of the Apostolic equipment, 189
- Synoptic Problem, the, illustrated, 4-5, 12, 13, 14, 35, 42, 45, 47-48, 67, 73, 80-82, 86-87, 103-104, 130, 146, 173
- Temple, cleansing of the, 102, 208-210; used as symbol of our Lord's body, 66, 210
- Temptation, meaning of the word, 5; our Lord's, 5-6, 131-132
- "Tempting God", meaning of phrase, 6
- "Three days", meaning of phrase, 24, 44, 129
- Tradition, oral, 119
- Transfiguration, the, 37, 93, 149
- Trial of our Lord before the Council, 66-67, 191-192, 266-267; before Pilate, 68, 110, 267-268
- "True" in the sense of "real", 200, 257; in the sense of "literal", 226
- Truthfulness, our Lord's, 88, 197, 229
- "Until", use of word, 2, 185
- Virgin Birth, the, 1, 2, 84, 201-202

## INDEX

- Virginity, perpetual, of the Blessed Virgin, 28, 120-121 (see also *Brethren, our Lord's*)
- "Waiting for the kingdom", meaning of, 114, 127
- Walking on the sea, purpose of, 223-224
- Watchfulness, teaching on, 57, 58-59, 159-160
- Western manuscripts, curious text of in Luke 24, 197-198
- "Wisdom of God", the, what, 158
- "World", the, use of word, 264-265
- Zacchaeus, Jew or Gentile? 177
- Zacharias, father of St. John the Baptist, 119-120, 123-124; "son of Barachias", 55, 158









## Date Due

NEW BOOK

NO 19'53

DE 23 '53

JA 4- '54

MR 22'50"

AP 14 '55

MAY 10 '56



\_\_\_\_\_

ALL 11 2 2011







BS2555 .K74  
A commentary on the Gospels.

Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library



1 1012 00119 2360